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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

WE discuss in a leading article the situation created by the rejection of the new Prayer Book, which is by far the most interesting event since we last went to press. The echoes of the controversy still reverberate; and Cabinet colleagues are beginning to take the gloves off. It is common ground that the Church is now confronted with a very awkward situation. The next step is with the Bishops; but that step seems likely to be of the character of marking time. Upon one important point there is little room for doubt. The decision of the House of Commons, though for our part we regret it, is thoroughly popular in the country.

The debate on Unemployment in the House of Commons on Monday was not very encouraging. Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland thought it "a pity to raise the question of unemployment just now." The high unem-

ployment figures now ruling are due, he argued, to the coal dispute of last year, from which we have not yet fully recovered. Trade was improving before that setback; it is improving again now; and, given a continuance of industrial peace, it should continue to improve. Meanwhile there was nothing which the Government could usefully do—unless it be to "safeguard" threatened industries. Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister spoke in a similar key. The Ministerial speeches contained no hint of recognition of the special character of our post-war unemployment—namely, its concentration round certain industries which show no signs of being likely to reabsorb it—or of the large-scale transference problem which this fact opens out. This Know-Nothing attitude contrasted somewhat curiously with the attitude displayed in the coal debate a fortnight earlier, when it was common ground that there was a large surplus of coal-miners, and the Government foreshadowed the appointment of a travelling Commission charged with the task of finding openings for them in other trades. This admission and this remedy have apparently exhausted the Government's realism and resourcefulness.

* * *

The most interesting speech of the debate—though it had no very direct bearing on the question of unemployment—was that made by Mr. Hammersley, the Conservative Member for Stockport, who surveyed the position of the cotton industry, pleaded for "large-scale amalgamations," and urged that the four Lancashire banks should take joint action in this direction. It is noteworthy, in this connection, that the Cotton Yarn Association has come out once more with an appeal to the trade to give it the support necessary "to end the present chaos." In this new appeal, the Association lays greater stress than it has done hitherto on the need, not only for stabilizing prices and regulating production, but for "a reorganization of trade methods." Emphasis is laid, for example, among the objects put forward on "standardizing qualities," and "investigating and initiating reductions of cost in the directions which are handicapping Lancashire's trade." It remains to be seen what response this appeal will meet, and by what concrete proposals it will be followed up.

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On Tuesday Sir Archibald Sinclair, on behalf of the Liberal Party, initiated a debate on agriculture. Mr. Guinness, in reply, maintained that "the main root of agricultural depression" was to be found in the movement of agricultural prices. That is true; though it is not true, as he proceeded to say, that prices were quite outside the Government's control. It is too little realized that agriculture, as an industry which is subject to competitive world prices, has suffered just as

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much as any exporting industry from the return of the gold standard two years ago. Mr. Guinness indicated that the Government intend to introduce next year their long-delayed scheme of long-term credits for agriculture. He pointed to the beet-sugar subsidy and to the relief afforded to agriculture in respect of rates and taxes, as evidence that the Government had "given the maximum help to the industry consistently with their pledges and with a true regard to economy," and he held out the hope that "a further lightening of these burdens would come from the Road Fund when the financial position allowed." These references to "the financial position" indicate clearly the nature of the obstacle which at present hampers at every turn a constructive agricultural policy; and gave point to Mr. Lloyd George's retort that "you cannot deal with agriculture without dealing first with the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

* * *

This does not imply, let us hasten to add, that it is desirable to dole out general subventions to agriculture in disregard of sound economic principles. The recently issued Report of the Royal Commission on Land Drainage (Cmd. 2993) supplies an excellent example of the nature of the problems which turn on the issue of "State assistance." The Royal Commission paints an extremely gloomy picture of the present position in regard to drainage:—

"We fear that the position with regard to land drainage has steadily become worse since the Report of the Select Committee was presented (in 1877). . . . With the heavy fall in the prices of agricultural products and the splitting up of estates during the last few years, the serious waterlogging of land may be expected to become even more prevalent, unless adequate steps are taken to ensure that drainage operations, in many cases of an extensive character, are carried out efficiently and economically."

Yet, serious as the position is, and grossly wasteful as, in the Commission's opinion, is this progressive waterlogging of the land, they hesitate to propose "extensive schemes" so long as the burden of financing them falls, as it must under our present arrangements, on the farmers themselves. They conclude, therefore, by urging the principle of "assistance from the Exchequer," and they present a very strong case in favour of this principle on general grounds of public interest. The report of this Royal Commission is well worth careful reading by all students of economic problems. Another publication bearing on the agricultural situation which we would commend to the attention of our readers is a Report of the Land and Nation League on Agricultural Marketing, published in booklet form under the title of "The Farmer and his Market," by Ernest Benn, Ltd. (1s.).

* * *

Colonel Lane-Fox's statement on the retail prices of household coal draws attention to another aspect of the coal question. "The recent increase of 2s. per ton in retail prices of coal in Central London," declared the Secretary for Mines to the House of Commons, "is not due to an increase in pit-head prices." Furthermore, "a comparison of the margins between pit-head prices and retail prices at this period of 1924 and 1927 shows that, without the last 2s. rise, the margins in favour of the merchants are higher now than in 1924." He was accordingly "not satisfied" that the recent rise in retail prices is "justified." Heckled as to what he proposed to do about it, Colonel Lane-Fox answered that the "ordinary law of competition," fortified by his statement, "should be allowed to meet the case." His questioners were naturally as dissatisfied with this answer as is the Minister with the price of coal. Amid

the rain of supplementary questions, there was an interesting interjection by Mr. Austin Hopkinson:—

"Is not this increase in the price of household coal actually a part of the scheme of the rationalization of the industry which is so widely advocated?"

Well, it is no part of anybody's idea of rationalization that the merchants should get bigger margins, while the colliery companies receive the old pit-head prices. But, undoubtedly, the principle of "charging what the traffic will bear"—raising prices where the demand is assured and cutting them where keen competition must be encountered—seems largely to inspire the coal-owners' present cartel schemes; and household coal is likely to be regarded as falling under the former head. The principle is not one which, in the present plight of the coal industry, can be ruled out as altogether illegitimate; but its operation will need careful watching.

* * *

The General Council of the T.U.C. met on Tuesday to consider an invitation received from twenty-four leaders of industry to a conference on the whole field of industrial reorganization and industrial relations. Those members of the Council who wished to decline the invitation (of whom the most vehement was the inevitable Mr. A. J. Cook) pointed out that it came from a non-representative group of employers. To this the moderate members replied, with some force, that the signatories represented at least one thousand millions of capital, and were most influential in the world of industry. They are, indeed, a formidable group, including Sir Alfred Mond, Lord Aberconway, Lord Ashfield, Lord Colwyn, Mr. S. Courtauld, Sir Josiah Stamp, and Lord Weir; and it would have been a gross act of folly if the General Council had refused to confer with them. Fortunately, after four hours' discussion, it was decided to accept the proposal for a conference, and a sub-committee was appointed to prepare agenda and make arrangements for a full meeting of the General Council with those sending the invitation. The conference itself is likely to be held in February, and should mark a significant advance towards better industrial relations.

* * *

The new American Navy programme, big as it is, is not satisfactory to the Big Navy Group in Congress, who object to the proposed power for the President to suspend construction in the event of a new limitation conference. The Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee desires to cut out the discretionary clause, and to provide for a definite five years' programme which could only be suspended by Act of Congress. The Big Navy Group, of course, want the cruisers for their own sake, as a step towards American naval supremacy, while the President may regard them mainly as a bargaining asset with which to secure an agreement on limitation at a future date. The American people as a whole may not like the colossal expenditure that would be necessary in order to realize the full programme; but they have been led to believe that the failure at Geneva was wholly due to British attempts to wriggle out of the principle of parity, and if they become convinced that parity is not attainable by agreement, they will lend a ready ear to those for whom parity is not enough. The proper British reply to the new programme is certainly not counter-construction, but a serious attempt to repair the damage done at Geneva.

* * *

Canton has been recaptured by the forces under Li Fu-lin, and the recapture has added to the distresses of the population. The soldiery, acting under general

instructions, carried out reprisals against what they chose to call the Communist Party in Canton. As far as can be judged the Communist population were those inhabitants who happened to be in the streets when the soldiery entered the town. After a day of indiscriminate shooting and bayoneting the reprisals became more methodical: a systematic hunt for Red Russians was undertaken, and a considerable number of Russians were shot. After these preliminaries, regular action was taken against the Russian Consular officials in Canton; and almost at the same time the Nanking Government took similar steps against the Russian Consulate in Shanghai. In Canton, the soldiery seized the Russian Consulate: what happened to the officials is by no means clear. Some reports state that a number of them lost their lives; others that they escaped as refugees. In Shanghai, the closing of the Russian Consulate was more regular.

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It would be waste of time to speculate on the consequences of this extraordinary turn in Chinese politics. All that can be done for the moment is to elucidate the present position as much as possible. First, is this sudden break with the Russian Government a deliberate step by the Nanking authorities? It may have been so at Shanghai; but at Canton, the break seems far more accidental. Li Fu-lin was nominally under the orders of Nanking; but the onslaught on the Russian Consulate seems to have been a sort of logical conclusion to the anti-Communist reprisals which had been going on for days. The immediate outcome is, however, that the Canton, Nanking, and Shanghai sections of the nationalists are now more or less united, and that the Hankow section will ask for official Russian aid. Nobody has ever been able to find out what assistance Russian Communists have given to the organizers of social disorder in China; but it is beyond a doubt that Russian military advisers were largely responsible for the successes of the Kuomintang armies in the early part of the year. If the Hankow authorities play their Russian cards well and quickly they may improve their military position considerably before the next campaigning season begins.

* * *

The Communist Party in Moscow has passed a resolution declaring that the friends of Trotsky are counter-revolutionary enemies of the people, and expelling ninety-eight leaders of the opposition, including Rakovsky, Kameneff, and Radek, from the Party. This decision seems to have been very distasteful to the men affected, and some of them are willing to eat any quantity of humble pie in order to get readmitted. Kameneff, Zinovieff (the reputed writer of a notorious letter), and others, presented a document to the Congress pleading guilty to all charges, retracting all their heresies, and offering unreserved submission to party discipline. They were sternly rebuffed. The Congress refused to consider the application, and referred it to the Central Committee with instructions not to readmit any of the applicants until after six months' probation under close observation. Thus, to all appearances, the Stalinists have won a complete victory and routed their opponents. Nevertheless, it is probable that, as the Riga Correspondent of the *TIMES* reports, there is considerable uneasiness at the loss of at least half of the intellectual force of the Party, and it would not be surprising if individual penitents were welcomed back into the fold even before their six months' "ticket-of-leave" has been completed.

* * *

For some obscure reason the *POPULAIRE* published only at the end of last week a resolution on foreign

policy adopted by the Permanent Administrative Council—that is, the National Executive—of the French Socialist Party on November 16th. It is of some importance, for in it the Executive categorically condemns the French alliances, which one of the leading members of the Socialist Party, M. Paul-Boncour, so stoutly defended at Geneva in 1924. They are declared to be inconsistent alike with the Pact of Locarno and the Protocol, and to be an obstacle to the "pacific revision" of the peace treaties by the League of Nations. If the French Socialist Party follows up this resolution by action in the same sense, and makes the policy of alliances an issue in the forthcoming general election, the choice between the two inconsistent policies that the French Government is pursuing simultaneously will be put before the French electors. The policy of revising the peace treaties, to which M. Léon Blum has committed himself even more explicitly in an article in the *POPULAIRE*, is, of course, irreconcilable with the Protocol as it stands. M. Blum demanded that the League of Nations should be given power to revise treaties without the consent, and even against the will, of their signatories.

* * *

The proposals for self-government put forward by the Kenya Convention have drawn an impressive protest from the Kikuyu Central Association in a letter to the Chief Native Commissioner. The Association, naturally enough, favours direct control by the Colonial Office—it is a very satisfactory thing that "Downing Street interference" is regarded as a charter of liberties by the East African native. It objects particularly to the Kenya proposals by which representation of the native population would be entirely in the hands of Europeans. "Nobody," says the letter, "is able to change a European into an African," and the proposal strikes the natives as a mockery of representation. The protest is interesting, as indicating the dawn of political consciousness in the East African native mind, and the Commission on East African Federation will have to take it into account. Opposition to federation is not, however, confined to the natives. Sir Donald Cameron, Governor of Tanganyika, who is justly proud of the administration of the mandated territory, has summed up his impression of the Kenya memorandum by asking Tanganyika to examine it and remember that we need not all elect to live in a village that voted the earth was flat. He will, no doubt, be accused of being tainted with West Africanism.

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It would be interesting to know just what General Hertzog meant by his declaration at Johannesburg that attempts from overseas to interfere in South African native affairs might one day cost the Empire the greater part of what was included in it in South Africa. Surely General Hertzog does not suggest that the British Government has interfered, or attempted to interfere in matters of South African domestic politics? Is it merely that he is aggrieved by individual criticisms of South African native policy? Or is it that he resents the existence of large native populations for whom the Imperial Government has a direct responsibility, which is not likely to be transferred to the Union in the absence of adequate safeguards? In either event, his best answer is to produce a policy that shows some signs of solving the problem. As to the threat of secession, those who use it, not only in South Africa, might be well advised to consider whether secession, as Swift wrote of the abolition of Christianity, might not "be attended with some inconveniences."

CHURCH AND STATE

THE rejection by the House of Commons of the Prayer Book measure may be regarded as a protest—the only protest that Parliament could make—against the growing ecclesiasticism of the Established Church. The majority led by the Home Secretary was inspired, no doubt, by various motives. The old Puritanism, the new agnosticism, the fear of Rome, the dislike of change, the distrust of episcopal authority, the smouldering discontent of the man in the pew, the general disgust of the man in the street at practices which he regards as nonsense—all these forces played their part. But, above all, it was an attempt to reassert the authority of Parliament over a Church which has become insubordinate. The Church of England, by its constitution, so the argument ran, is an essentially Protestant body. It appears, however, in practice to be no longer Protestant. With or without the connivance of the Bishops, Romish ceremonies and Romish practices have crept in. The time, then, has come when, by some means or other—though no one quite knows how—its Protestantism must be restored. To allow this new book to pass would be to play into the hands of the Romanizing party. Even so, the result was unexpected. Who could have believed that a measure, backed as this was by the Bishops and Curates, and by the overwhelming majority of the congregations committed to their charge, would be so signally defeated?

To some extent also the result was probably accidental. Not murder but bookslaughter would, perhaps, be the correct verdict. For on those rare occasions when Members of Parliament, like slaves at the Saturnalia, are allowed the luxury of a free debate, they love to enjoy their freedom. To listen with an open mind to the arguments on both sides, especially on so fascinating a subject as religion, and then to give a vote on the merits of the case, according to the dictates of one's conscience, what could be more enjoyable? But it happened that on this occasion the eloquence of the day, the luck of the debate, was all against the Bishops. Never before had Lord Hugh Cecil, the chosen champion of the Church, seemed so halting and ineffective; never had Mr. Bridgeman, in his newly adopted rôle of the man in the pew, seemed less inspiring. To the Protestants, however, a new eloquence had apparently been given, so that to some of those who heard them it almost seemed as if a power from on high was intervening to secure the defeat of Popery. Many members who had gone down to the House in a mood of uncertainty or indifference were stirred to passionate indignation, as they listened to the report of aurubrics and chasubles, of albs and maniples introduced into our English churches, and were warned of the insidious dangers of the doctrine of the Mass. They were witnessing, said the Home Secretary, a return to mediæval notions, while Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell declared that in one generation if this book were passed the priests "could swing over all the children of England from the Protestant Reformed faith to the Roman Catholic faith." Could Parliament allow such things to happen?

But when all explanations have been given, it is impossible to explain away the seriousness of the result, whether regarded from the standpoint of the Church or

the State. Consider first the position of the Church. It is not as if this book had been carelessly prepared or hastily adopted. It is the outcome, as we are told, of nearly twenty years of work and discussion. Formulated on the advice of a Royal Commission, it represents the long and devoted labour of a Committee of Bishops, and in its final form had been approved, not merely by the representative Church Assembly, which passed it by a majority of more than four to one, but by every Diocesan Conference in the country. Even in those dioceses in which the Bishops themselves were opposed to it—the dioceses of Worcester and Norwich—it still passed the conference by a large majority. It represents, in fact, as few things of the kind have ever done, the prevailing mind and temper of the Church of England. In a body which has so long been distracted by its unhappy divisions, the new prayer book seemed to hold out a fair prospect of unity and peace. By the vote of last week, after a few hours of debate, the book that had been prepared with so much labour—the object of so many hopes and prayers—has been destroyed. Is it surprising that the Bishop of Ripon should describe this result as a tragedy at which he stands dazed and bewildered, and that the Dean of Lincoln should assert that no greater blow has been dealt to the Church since the days of the Long Parliament?

The Church of England has, indeed, been wounded in the house of its friends. If in a Parliament which contains more than 400 Conservative members, most of them professing Churchmen, it could only secure the support of less than half that number, while 160 of them voted against it and 57 were absent unpaired, what reasonable hope has it that in any future Parliament its voice will be heard?

But regarded from the standpoint of the State, the position is hardly less serious. For it is clear that last week's vote settles nothing. The chasubles, the albs, and the maniples will still be worn, in spite of all that has been said about them; the candles will still be lighted; the incense still burnt; the dangerous doctrine of the Real Presence will still be proclaimed. The only practical difference is that the authority of the Bishops has been weakened, and that a compromise which seemed to hold out some prospect of peace and order has been frustrated. What, then, is Parliament now to do? How are the opinions which inspired the vote of last week to be vindicated and enforced? If the Bishops and the Church Assembly are not to be trusted, only two alternative policies of any logical consistency would appear possible. One policy would be to strengthen the Establishment. Let a new Department of State be set up with the Home Secretary as Minister of Religion, and Lord Cushendun to represent the Department in the Upper House. We are already familiar with the sight of His Majesty's prisons—at any rate from the outside. Why not also His Majesty's Churches and Chapels? Not a vestment could then be worn nor a prayer said without the consent of Parliament, and the annual vote on the Estimates would give members a golden opportunity of reviewing the theological position. In that way, doubtless, a proper discipline could be enforced, and the Protestantism of the Church maintained. Failing this, the only practicable policy would appear to be the old way of disestablishment. The

Romish practices might then continue, but the scandal to the House of Commons would be removed. As a Conservative newspaper said only a day or two ago: "The surging conviction of the House of Commons may prove, in the long run, to have broken the ties between the Church and the State."

We have no belief in the principle of the Establishment; but we should regard the raising of this issue as a profound misfortune. The wisest word, as it seems to us, in the House of Commons debate was said by Mr. Baldwin:—

"If Disestablishment becomes a political issue . . . you would then get for an indefinite period once more that association of religion and politics which I believe does more harm than anything can in our political life. . . . I dread that."

No one has better reason to dread it than those who are alive to the urgency of the economic problems which confront us, and the importance of focusing upon them a sustained public interest. Never has there been a time when we could less afford the distractions of politico-religious controversy. It is for this reason that we are apprehensive as to the results of last week's vote. Reading the Parliamentary speeches in the cold print of Hansard, we still cannot see that the Protestant position was endangered by the regularization of moderate High Church practices proposed in the rejected Prayer Book. But we do discern in what has happened a real danger to the happy immunity which we have long enjoyed from that most insidious disease which is known as "odium theologicum."

THE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

POTTERING about in South Devon last summer, I looked in at Hope Cove, the pleasantly sheltered nook behind Bolt Tail, just inside Bigbury Bay. Remembering that my friend Stephen Reynolds had been interested in the Cove, I got into conversation with a fisherman who was drying some nets on top of the cliff.

"You've got a nice quiet place down there to moor your boats," I remarked. "They could do with a little harbour like that at Sidmouth, where I come from. As it is, they have to haul their boats up over a sea-wall nearly every tide."

"Aye," said my fisherman, "thic wall run acrost hev made a deal of difference to us chaps. Before she was built, we losted half of our boats in one storm. 'Tis better now, but she wants to be carried out another twenty feet. Don't s'pose 'twill ever be done."

"Have you a fishermen's society here?"

"Yes, sir. Us sends away all we catches through the co-op. That's made a wunnerful difference too. We was a long time making up our minds to it, but I wish now we'd adone it years back. 'Twas like this you see: there used to be a crab-boat come round an' buy what we caught. But there was no depending on it. Sometimes 'twouldn't come for weeks, an' the fish would be stinking afore it were sold. An' at the best o' times they paid you what they liked for the stuff, an' that wasn't much, you may be sure! Now we sends it away to market regular,

an' gets back the market price. I wish I'd never seed thic old crab-boat."

I had some further talk with the man, and he made it perfectly clear that Hope Cove had been transformed from the fisherman's point of view by two things—the breakwater, and the Fishermen's Co-operative Society.

It is so unusual to find a fisherman admitting, let alone proclaiming, that conditions have improved, that the experience of Hope Cove intrigued me, and I made a few further inquiries.

First, in a Report to the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, signed in 1913 by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, Mr. S. H. Fremantle, and Mr. Stephen Reynolds, I discovered this note on Hope Cove:—

"A flat sand and grit beach strewn with rocks, and open to westerly winds. Motor-boats do not appear possible unless a breakwater can be built so that they can lie sheltered at moorings or can be beached in fairly smooth water."

So much for the breakwater. I have no doubt that it was built by a grant from the Development Fund, made on the recommendation of Stephen Reynolds as Fisheries Adviser to the Commissioners.

The Fishermen's Society, I found, was the product of persistent propaganda by the Fisheries Organization Society (also started by Reynolds), which has initiated between forty and fifty similar Societies in the smaller fishing places round the coasts of England and Wales. The Food Council has just assured us that there is no profiteering in fish; but there must have been either profiteering or bad management before these local Fishermen's Societies were formed, or how explain the great improvement in fishermen's earnings which they have produced? The most striking change has occurred, no doubt, in the little crabbing coves, like Hope Cove, which were formerly dependent upon a single buyer. But flourishing Fishermen's Co-operative Societies have also been built up in considerable ports like Brixham and Fleetwood. And here again we see the influence of the Development Commission at work, for the Fisheries Organization Society is mainly supported by an annual grant from the Development Fund.

My inquiries thus led to the conclusion that the fortunes of Hope Cove, as a fishing port, have been made by the benevolent intervention of a Government Department. That is, I think, worth noting. I have the very greatest respect for the ability and public-spirit of Civil Servants, and I am not one of those who regard State-interference as accursed. But I should not expect, in the ordinary way, to find Whitehall doing just what is needed to assist a small community in Devonshire to get a better livelihood from its traditional handicraft. There may perhaps be something in the peculiar (almost anomalous) constitution of the Development Commission which enables it to tackle a certain type of problem more successfully than the ordinary State Departments. If so, its constitution and activities are worth studying in these days, when home industries especially need developing as an offset to the loss of markets overseas.

The Development Commission came into existence as a by-product of Mr. Lloyd George's famous Budget. In that measure provision was made for the development of the countryside, and the Commission was set up (actually by the Development and Road Improvement Funds Acts, 1909 and 1910) to administer the money ear-marked for that purpose. The original Fund would have been exhausted long since if annual "refreshers" had not been voted by Parliament; so, strictly speaking, it is a flow and not a fund with which the Commissioners have to deal, and this flow

was considerably augmented in 1921 by the diversion into it of the special contribution to agricultural research which was given in compensation for the repeal of the Corn Production Acts.

There are eight Development Commissioners, under the Chairmanship of Lord Richard Cavendish, and there is a small permanent staff or secretariat, headed by Mr. Vaughan Nash, the Vice-Chairman. Two Advisory Committees, one on Agricultural Science and the other on Fishery Research, assist the Commissioners; but the Commissioners themselves may be properly regarded as an advisory committee to the Treasury, since they can only recommend, not direct, the making of grants and loans. On the face of it, the whole concern might be considered superfluous, since the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries would no doubt be capable of advising the Treasury on the merits of applications received. In practice, however, the Development Commission has proved a most valuable institution, combining in a remarkable way the virtues of detachment (for it cannot be suspected, as an executive department might, of having an axe of its own to grind) with intimate knowledge of the work assisted from its Fund. It is safe to say that, owing largely no doubt to the high personal qualities of its officers, the Development Commission has persuaded the Treasury to finance a great deal of valuable work which would otherwise have been neglected.

I have left myself very little space to indicate the character and variety of the objects which receive assistance. A glance at the Seventeenth Report of the Commissioners (Stationery Office, 3s.), recently issued, would, in any case, give the reader a much better idea of their work than I could convey. I must not, however, leave the impression that fishery harbours and fishermen's societies bulk largely therein. They are, in a sense, typical of the human side of the business. But Agricultural Science, mainly conducted in independent institutions, claims the lion's share of grants; Fishery Research, carried on both by the Fishery Departments and in Marine Biological Laboratories, is largely supported; and some grants, which may yield an enormous return in national development, are given towards the enrichment of village life.

This last aspect of the Commission's work is that in which the potentialities of its peculiar constitution are, perhaps, most clearly seen. The motor-'bus and the wireless have already transformed the countryside. Electric power and lighting, as they gradually extend, will carry the change still further. But mechanical development necessitates a corresponding growth of human institutions. Rural Community Councils have been formed in several counties to meet this need, and grants from the Carnegie Trustees for general maintenance, from the D.F. for rural industries organization, and from the County Councils for special health and educational services have enabled them to do effective work. Assistance of another kind is given by the Rural Industries Bureau, which is maintained almost entirely by grants from the Fund; village craftsmen's co-operative societies have also received financial help in the form of guarantees to enable the village craftsman to obtain modern equipment and machine aids on credit terms; and it is not too much to say that the whole movement has been stimulated and pulled together by wise counsel, as well as material assistance, received from the Commission. In short, the interested inquirer will find in many villages a heartening change akin to that which was revealed to me in Hope Cove, and attributable, as that is, to the discriminating help of the most modest of Government establishments.

Students of the machinery of government, please note.

A CHURCH UNCHURCHED

By AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

THE debates last week in Parliament on the proposals submitted by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the name and on behalf of the Church of England to repeal the Act of Uniformity of 1662, so as to allow certain agreed modifications in the administration of her services, after beginning somewhat tamely in the Lords where a large and favourable majority was easily secured, ended tumultuously in the Commons by the rejection of the proposals. The majority against the Church, though thirty-three in number, was, considering the importance of the occasion, not a large one, whilst the attendance in the division lobbies was shamefully small.

This victory, perhaps an untoward event, would appear to be mainly due to the redoubtable man who has himself taught us to call "Jix," thereby helping him to escape from the dull lists of "double-barrelled mediocrities," into the loftier one of monosyllabic dignity—Pitt, Fox, Jix!

The victory was for the moment at all events a real one, for it cannot be denied by any student of ecclesiastical history that by the vote of Thursday, December 15th, 1927, the Home Secretary in a Conservative Government has succeeded in unchurching the Church of England as by law established. It may be possible to retrace this step, but it will be difficult.

"Sed revocare gradum—
Hoc opus, hic labor est."

As it stands, what room is there now in the Established Church of England for Church principles, for the right, almost if not quite, the divine right of episcopacy and episcopal government; for the gift of the Holy Ghost descending upon the head of a Bishop on his consecration by the laying-on of the hands of three of his apostolically descended brethren? What need any longer to worry about the rule of faith, about sacramental gifts and graces, about authority as against private judgment, about antiquity, the early fathers, and the Four Councils? All these fine things go by the board in the Church of the Jixites. The lights of one of the three golden candlesticks have been blown out, and it is now made quite clear once for all that Macaulay was right when he stated in a head-note to his great Whig History that the Church of England originated at the Reformation.

Sir William Joynson-Hicks like most great heresiarchs was, unknown to himself, educated for the part history had destined him to play. Though not specially erudite, or seemingly marked out for an ecclesiastical career, we first hear of him as actively engaged in prosecuting a vigorous and well-endowed campaign against Anglo-Catholic views, and sending out paid missionaries into different parts of the country from whom he received, and sometimes did not receive, monthly reports of the success of their propaganda, and of the distribution of the truthful and temperate "literature" with which he was careful to keep them well supplied.

On his part this was a labour of love, for all the time he was a prosperous and highly honourable solicitor of the High Court who found time not only to attend to the affairs of many private clients, but also to those of that democratic and truly comprehensive institution, the General Omnibus Company, which occasionally found itself in Court to meet the charge of running over stray foot-travellers—both Protestant and Papist, in the crowded streets of this great Metropolis.

Being thus fully equipped for his great task our Protestant leader had small difficulty in making a powerful oration against the Archbishop's proposals, in the course

of which he made remarks with which many private citizens will agree, though most of them were irrelevant to the real issue before the House.

In the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who knows his age as a schoolboy knows the contents of his pockets, introduced the Repealing measure as composedly as if it were a Local Government Bill. He, indeed, hinted at the beginning that there were involved in his proposals some things that, were they gone into, would be found to touch upon the faith and devotional practices of such of his hearers as might chance to be Christians and Churchgoers, and not Jews, Nonconformists, and Agnostics, but he did this only to waive such things on one side as obviously out of place in their Lordships' House as at present constituted. After this hint his Grace went composedly on for an hour and ten minutes during which he described the present plight of the Church and mildly inquired how best he and the Fathers in God around him were to get along in the future.

As I listened to this discourse, admirable and well-judged as I felt it to be, I could not but think of that "great Achilles whom we knew," Mr. Gladstone and Roundell Palmer, of Lord Westbury and the saponaceous Samuel, of Robert Lowe and of that swashbuckling Erastian (of ecclesiastical descent), Sir William Harcourt, of the accumulated stores of their reading, of their intimate acquaintance with all the aspects of our Church history, of their fiery, if in some cases their unholy, zeal; and whilst half-asleep on the steps of the throne, I found myself murmuring Swinburne's lines to Walter Landor:—

"Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not,
We find none like thee."

The laity in the Lords made no great figure. Lord Carson drew a picture for us of an old woman who loved her Prayer Book of 1662 because neither she nor her mother had ever heard of there ever having been any other Prayer Books, much less of the old Canon of the Mass to which her great-great-grandmothers were probably most fervently attached. Lord Carson's old lady if left alone (so at least we all felt) would never discover that there was any difference between the so-called "Deposited Book" and the one scheduled to the Act of 1662.

Lord Carson's picture did not prove to be a moving one, and was certainly below the level of Cowper's old woman, who:—

"Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew."

When the measure got into the House of Commons, a different spirit was at once manifested.

When Mr. Bridgeman, taking a leaf out of the Archbishop's book, said he was not going to discuss Christian doctrine, he was met with cries of "Why not," which discomposed him.

Why should not the representatives of the people discuss whatever they choose? Did not the Council of Nicæa discuss doctrine? It may be true that Nicæa was an Ecumenical Council and composed solely of clerics—but what of that? Are not our M.P.s the chosen vessels of democracy, and as well qualified to discuss theology as political economy?

Nevertheless, the point ought to have been made that the House of Commons, not being either an Ecumenical Council or a Church Synod, has no right to choose a creed for a Church or to arrange its services, but only to decide whether or not it will allow the seal of the State to be affixed to a Church that has by her proposals made it plain

that she has ceased to represent the general religious sense of the nation.

The Cimmerian darkness that has apparently descended upon our ecclesiastical history seems to have prevented anybody in either House asking why in the name of conscience two thousand well appointed divines in 1662 refused to give their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained" in the Book Lord Carson's old woman loved so well; and sooner than do so were turned out to starve and die by the roadside. They may have been great fools for their pains and many of them had during the Cromwellian usurpation ejected many equally conscientious divines for refusing to read the Directory of Public Worship—but still out they went, and why?

For two reasons: *First*, because they saw, or thought they saw, Rome in the new Prayer Book more clearly than in the second Prayer Book of King Edward the Sixth—not perhaps full-blooded Romanism, but the germs of it, and particularly in the Communion Service. Who can say they were wrong? Our Church Service has always been a compromise. As the great Lord Chatham expressed it, with its Calvinistic articles to please Geneva, its Romish liturgy to foster the seeds of its Catholicism, and its Arminian clergy to preach good works. Particularly was this accommodating spirit made plain in the Communion Service. The Altar and the Table with its "fair white cloth," were alike admitted into the parish church. The Table for Commemoration and the Altar for sacrifice, each has as much, or as little, right to be there as the other.

During the eighteenth century the Table theory may have prevailed over the Altar theory, though even in what Mr. Gladstone used to call, with a shudder, "the bad times" of Bishop Hoadly and Archdeacon Paley, there were always bishops, priests, and laymen to uphold the Altar and the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Elements after consecration by a priest.

Of late years Church principles have spread, reaching even so far as St. Giles', Edinburgh. Low Church views, like those entertained by the late Miss Catherine Marsh, have suffered an eclipse since the days when Lord Lincolnshire was first taken to the Chapel Royal by his mother and almost dedicated to fight for the Cause that far-seeing lady already perceived to be in danger.

The Deposited Book is as much a compromise as its predecessors, but it is a compromise slightly in favour of the Altar. Doctrinally, we are assured there is no difference. Certainly there is none Romewards, though some keen noses have detected a step in the direction of the Eastern Church. All dogmas are mostly matters of emphasis. The Church of Rome is as evangelical as ever was the late Charles Simeon, but she also places emphasis on Church authority and so on all through the Creeds.

The other reason why many people of light and leading became and remained Nonconformists was because they kicked at episcopacy.

Why did John Knox, the author of that Black Rubric so many lovers of the Prayer Book have just discovered, refuse the English Bishopric that was offered him? Why did Richard Baxter say *Nolo Episcopari*? Why did Doddridge? Simply because they thought there was no certain warrant in Holy Scripture for episcopacy. Jix and his friends have no such squeamish scruples. They have no objection to the order of Bishops so long as there is no need to pay any attention to their wishes.

The Home Secretary has dreams of a Federation of Protestant Churches. Has he ever considered the question of Holy Orders?

LIFE AND POLITICS

IT is now generally conceded that the rejection of the Prayer Book in the House of Commons was an accident.

In the prevalent confusion the mass of indifferent or wavering opinion was rushed by the party that knew its own mind and had the biggest or at least the loudest guns of debate. Of these, the most resounding, of course, was Sir William Joynson-Hicks. It was, as the vulgar say, "Jix's night out." Since the event, the Protestant hero has been rattling his armour at the invitation of the interviewers, and breathing defiance of Rome. In all this Jix undoubtedly represents a stubborn and enduring body of English opinion. I confess that the revelation of the strength of the surviving no-popey sentiment which the debate brought up, as it were, from the general subconscious, was a surprise to me. One might say that the mass of members did not know what to think, but they knew well enough what to feel—centuries of English history prompted them. This much-praised debate seemed to me noteworthy not so much for its intellectual content as for the outrush of primitive emotion that it released. The wisest, the most modern word came, I thought, from Mr. Baldwin with his quiet soothing of extremes and his earnest warning against a new heresy hunt in the Church of England. How necessary that warning is can be estimated from reading any one of Jix's pæans in the newspapers. Jix would push on with a crusade to eject the Anglo-Catholics from the Church; he would use the law as a scourge with which to whip them into the arms of Rome. Now, writing from a completely detached standpoint, I cannot but regard this as vicious nonsense. Better a thousand times that the Revised Prayer Book had been passed than that Parliament should have given freedom to Jix and his like to persecute. The hateful spirit of Pecksniffian intolerance is always there, latent, ready to be stirred into action by the unscrupulous or the merely enthusiastic. In politics we saw its working when the Russians were bundled out of London. The author of that piece of foolishness is quite capable of repeating the feat in another sphere.

* * *

The Prayer Book debate was memorable also as showing what an interesting place the House of Commons would become if it could be freed from the regimentation of opinion by party. When the Whips were taken off debate at once became a living thing; speeches actually influenced votes from hour to hour; and the issue was in doubt until the last moment. The House was for once in its modern existence fulfilling its true function. It is the dullness and lassitude of the foregone conclusion that kill the reality of discussion and make people indifferent or contemptuous of the Parliamentary sham fight. Members were bewildered by their unwonted liberty, and did not quite know what to do with it, but they enjoyed it. The decline of public interest in Parliamentary debates is quite recent and is very largely due to the dreary inevitability of the result in these days of mechanical majorities. If the score of football matches was fixed beforehand the popular Press would not think it worth while to pay much attention to them. We can easily pay too high a price for stability in government. Why should not the House of Commons in its own interests arrange to have one of these party holidays from time to time, it being arranged to keep to the existing Government whatever happens in the division lobby, as the price of a breath of freedom. The actual decision is what matters. The outcome of free debate in this instance was what seems to me to have been a mistaken decision, but that does not affect the point that for once in a way the House of Commons came alive.

"Little Englandism" has been common enough in the past as a term of abuse. Anglican Tories have used it as a half-brick for Liberals before now. Consequently it interests me to see Anglican clergymen making such a strong point of the fact that the opinion of England was overborne by Scotland and Wales in the voting on the Prayer Book measure. The inference seems to be that this was an English affair, in which Scottish Presbyterians and Welsh Nonconformists intruded as alien invaders. This is, of course, mere nonsense, unless we are to accept the rule of extreme Little Englandism in Anglican politics. The average Anglican parson would be the first to repudiate the inference, which, if accepted, would make the Church of provincial importance, instead of being the Established Church of most of the British Empire. The point has another edge, for I imagine the votes of English members had quite a lot to do with the carrying of Irish and of Welsh Disestablishment.

* * *

There was a luncheon recently at which all sorts of distinguished people met to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of a famous Building Society. Figures were quoted showing an almost fantastic rate of increase in the business of building societies since the war. This, of course, was a sound basis for congratulation, but what struck me about it, and not for the first time on such occasions, was that it is possible for eminent persons to make quite long speeches without ever mentioning the point at all. I am no expert on building society finance, but even I expected to find in the oratory as reported some mention of the notorious cause of the vast increase in building society business. It is quite simple. But whether it is a cause for congratulation is more dubious. Does anyone really suppose that this rush to the building societies by working people is any true token of national prosperity? Of course it is not. It simply means that owing to the scandalous neglect of the Government and the public authorities in providing houses which people can rent, which is what they would naturally do, they have been simply forced in their thousands to resort to building societies to get a roof over their heads at all. At the conclusion of an interesting investigation into the housing conditions in the Lancashire towns the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN has just reported that "nothing has been done for these people"—that is, the people who cannot afford to pay more than about seven or eight shillings a week rent—the poorest people.

* * *

The Olympian arrogance of Mr. Churchill's judgments in "The World Crisis" raised up against him a host of well-equipped critics. They have now paid him a high compliment and done him a valuable service in publishing their criticisms in a book. This is a compliment, because no other history of the war has been thought worthy of an elaborate attack of the kind, and it is an unconscious tribute to Mr. Churchill's achievement. He has written the most impressive, the most provocative, and probably a lasting book on the war, a work full of sublime self-confidence and marked by his peculiar power of sweeping summary. In his attitude towards the leading personalities of the war period Mr. Churchill reminds one of Turner's absurd and sublime picture called "Napoleon on St. Helena regarding the Limpet." Mr. Churchill must always be striking that sort of attitude, both in public and in his own mind. The critics of his book have done him valuable service in supplying him with material for correction on matters of fact. He has now only quietly to make use of it in his next edition and he is more or less protected against posterity—which will without question turn for excitement if not for information to "The World

Crisis." The historian who knows how to mask his prejudices under a fine pulpit style is always read.

London, it seems, must resign herself to struggling along without a motto. After fifteen years of earnest search and deliberation the London County Council has given it up. There is nothing good enough, either in Latin or English. Years ago, when the hunt was still fresh, we only just escaped *Loci dulcedo nos attinet*—the sentiment expressed according to Tacitus by those Londoners who refused to find a better hole before the advance of Boadicea. These early members of the Conservative Party would certainly be sorry afterwards that they had placed sentiment before safety, and perhaps it was as well that the L.C.C. rejected this motto, which gives scope for the modern ironist. It is not the sweetness of the place that holds us to present-day London, but the extreme difficulty of getting out of it. On the whole, the Council is probably wise to wait until the appropriate motto, the *mot juste*, "emerges spontaneously out of some striking event in the Council's history." Perhaps the destruction of Waterloo Bridge will provide the necessary stimulus? "We know better" would be a homely but expressive English motto.

The curious thing about the reception of "The King of Kings" film on the life of Christ is that while the religious people were pleasingly surprised to find themselves not horrified, the expert critics almost without exception condemned it as a poor thing. The latter, who are not much interested in the discussion about the propriety of using the story of Christ to make money for Hollywood, are agreed that it contains nothing that is new or important technically. It would be fair, I think, to say that many religious leaders are reconciled to the film on the theory that a bad advertisement is better than neglect, and many feel that in spite of all the vulgarity there is a residuum of something really moving. It may be conceded that the film achieves remarkable decency considering its origin, and its faults are due to the limitations of the conceiving mind rather than to any wilful catchpenny grossness. It is defaced, of course, by some amazing silliness. Would it occur to anyone out of Hollywood to make Mary Magdalene the mistress of Judas Iscariot, who is presented as a corrupt millionaire who would never be tempted by anything so small as thirty pieces of silver? There is said to be a mediæval legend on the theme, but even so, is there any reason for reviving it? Only the most stubborn sentimentalizers of the Middle Ages hold that they were free from vulgarity.

One or two interesting discoveries about betting on dogs have been made within the last few days. One discovery stands to the credit of Major-General J. E. B. Seely, who doubles the parts of head of the National War Savings Movement and Chairman of the Wembley Greyhound Race-course. It is that betting on dogs is rather an encouragement to thrift than otherwise. This information will, of course, dispose of those illiberal fanatic killjoy people all over the country who live in contact with the poor and have had the audacity to oppose petty gambling as wasteful and anti-social. The second discovery was squeezed out of the Home Secretary in the House of Commons—that to make bets with children is not illegal. (Children are good customers of the bookmakers on dogs. They are obviously saving their money.) It is surely a preposterous thing even in an illogical country that while it is an offence to sell tobacco to anyone under sixteen, or liquor to one under eighteen in a bar, it is no offence at all to take bets from a child.

Journalistic enterprise of the MORNING POST :—

"Riddles of Outer Space."

By our Special Representative."

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. WELLS AND DEMOCRACY

SIR,—Mr. Wells's genial letter has convicted me of sin. I ought not to have suggested that any change or growth has taken place in his attitude towards Democracy. I ought to have borne in mind his "Samurai" and other precursors of "Mr. Clissold's" expert oligarchy. I had no intention of declaring that his "Democracy under Revision" "accepts the failure of democracy as an established truth." Nor did I make such declaration. If, in spite of the author's disclaimer, I continued to regard "William Clissold" as in some sense a speculative rendering or an emanation of Mr. Wells, I have erred in common with most of his readers. But I withdraw the suggestion of "quick change." I was dazzled by his magical facility of selling old lamps for new.

—Yours, &c.,

J. A. HOBSON.

December 18th, 1927.

THE WAR GUILT QUESTION

SIR,—Some sort of inquiry into the question of what is called "war guilt" seems to me desirable for the sake of France as much as of Germany. I see little hope of any radical change in the French temper until the French people have been convinced that the theory of the sole responsibility of Germany for the war is false. More books refuting that theory have been published in France than in any other country, but most Frenchmen refuse to read them for fear that their faith in German guilt might be upset. It is more convenient to hold that, as the *TEMPS* frequently says, the question is *chose jugée*, having been settled once and for all by the Treaty of Versailles. Perhaps the best form of inquiry would be one by an international committee of historians, should it be possible to form one composed of men whose names would inspire confidence. The authors of serious works on the question, whatever their present conclusions, should be invited to join it.

Meanwhile, why should not the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Versailles, as Professor Victor Basch has suggested, formally withdraw the accusation against Germany in the Treaty "without prejudice"? The objection raised in France that such a withdrawal would involve the renunciation of reparations, which are based by the Treaty on the sole responsibility of Germany, is met by the recent declaration of the German Chancellor that Germany is seeking only moral satisfaction and will continue in any case to fulfil her obligations under the Treaty.

Some of the letters that you have published seem to me to show the necessity of an inquiry. I agree with "An Outsider" that pre-war ambitions and sentiments have to be taken into account—but not only as regards Germany. From 1883 to 1911 France pursued the most aggressive expansionist policy of any country in the world and acquired territory with an aggregate area larger than that of the United States of America. During the same period Germany acquired only her African colonies, a footing in China, and Heligoland ceded to her by England. Bismarck encouraged Jules Ferry to embark on a colonial policy, no doubt to divert French attention from Europe, but French expansionism excited the jealousy of England and more than once led to serious complications between the two countries, and Italy was estranged from France by it, especially by the annexation of Tunis, which should have gone to Italy and has now a much larger Italian than French population. We annexed Burmah on account of a report that France had designs on it. The economic policy adopted by France in her colonies, where she denies the "open door" to other countries, made her expansionism particularly detrimental to the rest of the world. German fear that this policy would ultimately be adopted in Morocco was undoubtedly the chief cause of the quarrel between France and Germany about that country, which was one of the chief causes of the war. If expansionist sentiment in Germany was so dangerous, it is strange that Germany remained quiet for thirty years while France was laying hands on vast territories that she was incapable either of colonizing or administering. The French population of most French colonies consists mainly of officials and soldiers and their administration is a scandal and shockingly

corrupt. Only in her Mediterranean colonies has France had any success, and she should never have had any others.

If the Germans were "Siegesdrunk" more than twenty years after the war of 1870, the French were intoxicated by the desire for revenge. I recommend "An Outsider" to read M. Georges Michon's remarkable book, "L'Alliance Franco-Russe" (Delpeuch), just published, and in particular the quotations that he gives on pages 55-57 and 67-70 from French speeches and articles in 1893 and 1896. The Radicals, including M. Clemenceau, were as Chauvinist as the members of the Ligue des Patriotes, and joined with them in welcoming the Russian alliance as an instrument of revenge. Indeed, the whole French people, except the Socialists and some Conservatives, such as Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, were enthusiastic for the alliance only because it was believed to be an instrument of revenge and, when the Russians showed no desire to make war to recover Alsace-Lorraine for France, the enthusiasm cooled down. M. Michon gives quotations from articles in 1897 by M. Clemenceau and M. Lanessan, afterwards a member of the Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet, which express the general disappointment.

I can speak from personal experience of French feeling at a later date, for I lived in France from 1906 to 1918. After M. Poincaré became President in January, 1912, I saw war feeling being deliberately and successfully worked up by the Government. The temper in France in 1912-1914 was detestable, and I said so at the time, as my messages to the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN bear witness. I did what I could to warn the British public that M. Poincaré's policy was leading to war. So did Anatole France. In an interview that he gave me for the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN in June, 1913, just before M. Poincaré's visit to London, he said:—

"A few years ago, when the relations between England and Germany were strained, some of us feared that the Entente Cordiale might drag France into a war which she did not desire. Now the danger is in the opposite direction. Our Nationalists are urging you to increase your army in order that they may have it at their disposal. England can render no greater service, not only to the cause of peace, but also to the interest of France herself, than by making it plain to M. Poincaré and M. Pichon that they cannot count on her support for any adventurous policy."

It would take too much of your space to cite the innumerable examples that I could cite of the bellicose spirit and desire for revenge of the French ruling classes in 1912-1914. May I, however, cite two? In 1913 the French Academy, thanks to a great extent to M. Poincaré's influence, gave the Montyon prize to a book called "Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujourd'hui," the only merit of which was that it was a glorification of war. The authors said, among other things, that the word "war" had "suddenly recovered prestige," that young Frenchmen considered war to be "the occasion of the most noble human virtues," that they needed "practical action that will lay hold of us body and soul and take us out of ourselves." And they added:—

"Only one event will make that action possible for us—war—and therefore we desire it."

The authors undoubtedly expressed the sentiments of the great majority of the young men of the French bourgeoisie in 1913, when remarks of this sort were commonplaces. I do not think that any German book expressing such sentiments was given the formal commendation of an official body of the standing of the French Academy.

In the same year, M. Antonin Mercié, President of the Société des Artistes Français, tried to induce a sculptor called Max Bezner to withdraw a bust of the German Emperor that he had sent to the Salon, on the ground that it would cause hostile demonstrations. M. Bezner declined; and, as the bust could not be refused because he was *hors concours*, M. Mercié and the committee of the Salon put it in a room to which the public was not admitted.

Here is the other side of the picture. In May, 1913—just at the same time as the Salon—a loan exhibition of works of art was held in the Hotel de Sagan in Paris for the benefit of the French Red Cross Society. More objects were lent by German collectors than by any others, and Dr. Bode, who was then Director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, lent his whole collection of Italian faience.

It does not surprise me that the strongest opposition to an inquiry into the question of war guilt comes from France. —Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DELL.

December 10th, 1927.

P.S.—One of the authors of "Les Jeunes Gens d'Aujourd'hui" was M. Henri Massis, whose latest book, "Defence of the West," was dealt with in THE NATION of December 10th by Mr. Leonard Woolf with an appropriate lack of seriousness.

THE ALTERNATIVE VOTE AND P.R.

SIR,—The letter from Mr. William Clough in your last week's issue makes one doubt whether, even now, the nature of the Alternative Vote or of Proportional Representation has been sufficiently explained. Surely Mr. Clough, if he knows what the Alternative Vote means and how it would operate, cannot be under the impression that it would effectuate the return of an absolute majority candidate. That is precisely what the Alternative Vote does not do, and from the nature of the case cannot do. It comes into play only when the counting of the votes discloses the fact that the three or more parties contesting the seat are, every one of them, in a minority relative to the total vote polled. Resort is then had to the device by which *second* preferences are added to *first* preferences, until an absolute majority or plurality for one candidate is obtained. This one is then declared elected, but in what sense can the new member be said to *represent* an absolute majority? Legally and technically he "represents" the constituency, so does a member returned under the present system, whatever the number of the votes polled, but this representation is not what people mean when discussing methods of securing a distribution of seats in the House of Commons in substantial conformity with the strength of the parties in the country as disclosed by the polling. This formal or technical representation would be there even if the member were selected by lot, by throwing of dice, or the tossing of a coin.

The fact is that the Alternative Vote is a very good device for keeping out candidates who for political or personal reasons are objectionable to the majority of the electorate, but it is no use whatever for securing a House roughly in agreement with the division of opinion in the country. In fact, it is quite probable that under the Alternative Vote there would be far more minority candidates returned than now and the true state of the case, that is, the relative strength of the parties in the country, would not be shown in the House.

To obtain a true representation there is only P.R., and it is surprising to read that under it there would be double the number of minority representatives and that confusion would be worse confounded, as Mr. Clough thinks. What he says about "count after count, shuffling (!) of ballot papers, and transferring votes from candidate to candidate," &c., makes one think that he has in mind some ultra-refined system of P.R., which in any event would not be adopted in this country. As for his idea that in a five-member constituency there would probably, under P.R., be four minority representatives, I do not grasp his meaning. If 33,334 electors (to use his example) vote for a candidate, then the latter represents these 33,334 electors, no more and no less, just as another lot of 33,334 voters of another party get a representative of *their* choice, and so on. The question of majority and minority simply does not come in. P.R. has nothing to do with the places the electors live at, provided they are in the big constituency, but with their opinions.—Yours, &c.,

H. VERNON.

1, Lansdowne Road, N.3.
December 13th, 1927.

MORITURUS

SIR,—All readers of THE NATION who recognize that they are getting elderly—say, in the seventies—must have been deeply interested in Dr. Courtney's acute and searching analysis of approaching old age in your issue of December 10th. As one of those in the seventies, I should like to

add a corroborative instance which came under my observation some years ago.

A friend who was one of the best-known journalists of his day remarked to me, when he was seventy-five years old, that he thought he worked as hard as any man of his age in London. He was the dramatic critic of a daily paper and of an important weekly, and also the editor of another well-known weekly. Soon afterwards he began to fail, but would not give up work. I had been familiar with his handwriting for many years, and in his case his weakness exhibited itself physically in his handwriting before his mental faculties markedly failed. I well remember with what surprise and sorrow I noticed that his manuscript began to show words only partly written and others degenerating almost into hieroglyphics. These symptoms soon increased so much that he ceased to write his criticisms himself, but dictated them to an amanuensis. He passed away at the age of seventy-eight, keenly regretted by all who had had the happiness of being associated with him in his work.—Yours, &c.,

RETIRED SUB-EDITOR.

SIR,—The writer of this article closes on a note which must have pained no small number of your readers. He gives a most remarkable rendering of the last chapter of Ecclesiastes without any reference to "the conclusion of the whole matter," or to Koheleth's testimony that while "the dust returns to the earth whence it came, the spirit flies back to God, its home."

Mr. Courtney's clever description ends on the pessimistic note, and is thus untrue even to Koheleth, who closes his survey of life with an earnest appeal to the young to remember their Creator. The striking picture of tremulous old age which follows this appeal is no description of the godly, who ought to be serene in spirit to the last and fruitful in obedience. "The righteous shall still bring forth fruit in old age—to show that the Lord is upright" (Ps. xcii., 12-15). What is described is the dreary, perhaps premature, decay of one who in youth would "go on in every way of his heart and after every sight of his eyes." The admonition is so to use the morning of life that its evening may not be sad or chagrined, but calm and blessed—not the end of joy, but the threshold of a joy that lasts for evermore.—Yours, &c.,

(Rev.) WM. WILLIAMSON.

The Manse,

De Montfort Square, Leicester.
December 13th, 1927.

OTTERS AND FROGS

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Heinemann's letter on this subject, but cannot consider the evidence he brings forward proof that otters skin frogs, as the fact that he found freshly killed frogs on an island where the otter hounds had just spoken to the line of an otter is open to another interpretation, as the following episode will illustrate.

One day I had my old pet otter, Madame Moses, out for exercise, when she disappeared under a pond-side bush, where I could hear her busy with something. Looking to see what she was up to, I spied her with a pile of newly slain frogs before her, many of which were turned inside out. There were many rat footprints about the heap. Moses did not waste her opportunity, and ate the frogs up.

Rats frequently kill both frogs and toads, apparently for the sport of it, as they do not eat them, though they often disembowel their victims and leave them turned inside out, heaping them up at the waterside (when the casual observer credits an otter with the work) or carrying them off to a burrow. I once found a rat's nest surrounded by many scores of mummified toads. I am, of course, speaking of the true rat, the too common rat, *Rattus norvegicus*, and not the water-vole.

Your correspondent says that I do not seem to have observed the delight otters take in running water, nor their habit of rolling and rubbing food on the ground, such as an acid-secreting toad, or a slimy slug; but if he will refer to my writings on the otter, "Moses, My Otter," "Waterside

Creatures," &c., he will find such details of behaviour fully described, together with other ways and traits of character of this most delightful of animals.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCES PITT.

MISS ROYDEN AND THE GUILDHOUSE

SIR,—The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, has, in its seven years of work, made many friends outside the number of its regular congregation. Will you allow me, for this reason, to make an appeal to them through your columns?

I am shortly going for a year's journey round the world, during which time my people will keep the Guildhouse going with all the enthusiasm and efficiency they have always shown; but this summer we have had to seek a renewal of our lease, and the cost in connection with this (for alterations, repairs, &c.) amounts to £3,756 14s. 3d. Of this we have already raised £3,203 5s. 6d., almost all of which has been given by members of the congregation—not at all a rich one—with the help of such friends as Dame Clara Butt and Miss Sybil Thorndike.

We still need £553 8s. 9d. Will anyone who cares for the work we are doing help me to leave my people free from debt when I sail, by sending me a contribution, large or small?

I would not dare to ask either your space or their generosity if I did not believe that our work was worth doing, and know that it appeals to many who cannot actually attend our services. We seek not to compete with the Churches, but to do those things which, for various reasons, most of them feel unable to take up. We offer a free platform for free discussion of serious and even highly controversial questions; we make experiments which we are able to make because we get no one else into trouble; above all, we seek to present the Christian Faith to those disposed to question or to deny it, in an atmosphere in which they feel they can freely question or even deny without offending. Will some of our unknown and perhaps even distant friends help us at this juncture? In ordinary times we are financially quite equal to the calls upon us, but this has been a special and a heavy obligation.—Yours, &c.,

A. MAUDE ROYDEN.

The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

December 16th, 1927.

SHELLEY'S PUNCTUATION

SIR,—Professor Saintsbury's attack on the traditional position of the comma in Shelley's lines

"I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star showers, thrown,"

may remind some readers of Dr. Whitehead's estimate of Shelley. Where science notes the "spring" of air, as Boyle called it, or the expansive spread of gases, in Shelley's line the earth hails:—

"The vaporous exultation not to be confined!"

So, Whitehead comments, Shelley constantly expresses scientific facts by "poetic transcript." If scientific notions did guide Shelley's metaphors or images, the comma cannot be so confidently drawn back from "showers" to "dissolved," as Saintsbury does in your last issue. When Shelley wrote, light was usually regarded as corpuscular, and light dissolved in showers of stars would be sufficiently scientifically appropriate for poetic use. The "star-showers" would be "in the technical sense 'saturated' with light already" if they had dissolved light. The poetry of the passage, which depends upon the comparison of spray from waves to showers of stars, is not at the mercy of the doubtful comma. If the science of the passage is to be rigorous, it is at any rate possible that the spray from the crumbled wave gathers particles of light, as the shower of stars gathers them from the depths of space. The journey proposed for the comma may free the "run of the rhythm," it may even help the poetry, as Saintsbury affirms, but it does not seem to be required to avoid "nonsense" about "waves and light."—Yours, &c.,

JOSHUA L. GREGORY.

3, Oak Villas, Bradford, Yorks.

December 19th, 1927.

THE VALLEY OF THE GREY OLIVES

By LOUIS GOLDING.

THE new road that hurtles down from the mystic city of Safed on the top of the hills, towards Acre and the coast of Palestine, calms down into the silence and mystery of the Hittite olive-groves. The region seems to me a virginal Hittite country, for it appears to have preserved itself equally from the incidence of ancient prophecy and modern statesmanship. It is in the heart of Palestine and as little Jewish as Labrador. "From the wilderness and this Lebanon," ran the original promise to the Jews, "even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." So runs the prophecy; but it is prefaced by an implied condition: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that I have given unto you."

It was difficult to believe, as I threaded the quiet olive-groves, that any non-Hittite foot had penetrated there before mine. I could have envisioned Jews more easily in the rooms of the most nordic club at Princeton or in the Cardinals' council-chamber at the Vatican. Mile after mile the silent olive-groves extended, aloof from politics, sequestered in their own grey silence. The people of this valley, I learned, were Druses, of whom the mind presents itself so different a picture. Dark legends drift down from the Hauran and Lebanon, of a strange people performing nameless sacrifices. The Druses persist also upon Mount Carmel a few miles southward, with whom these white-turbaned ones we encountered were doubtless connected. I had not been able to dissociate in my mind the Druses upon Mount Carmel from the priests of Baal summoned thither by Elijah to contend with him in that desperate contention. Such wild tales do travellers among the Druses tell, of the initiates, the *akils*, that slash themselves in ecstasy with all manner of weapons, that the mind with a fearful sort of delight repairs again to the picture in Kings: "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

But there was no sign to be seen among these grave men and lads in the olive-groves that they so slashed themselves, that they abased themselves before images of procreation in their secret temples, the *khalwas*, that they performed nameless sacrifices and passed the blood of their victims in skulls from hand to hand. Their faces were smooth and decorous, their manners remote. We spoke with one of them, an old man, a shepherd leading his sheep. He was tall and stately and held a peeled branch in his left hand like a sceptre. He wore the white turban of his blameless life, a close-fitting black coat that skirted out behind his spotless white pants. He was not one of those learned Druses who have discovered so surprisingly that they are descended from a crusading family, the counts of Dreux, and are stated to have mysterious subterranean connections with the Rosicrucian mysteries. But he looked more like a Norman gentleman than a phallolatrous fanatic. It was certainly impossible to believe that he was descended from one of those unhappy priests of Baal who had escaped Elijah's notice in the bloody welter of the slaughter by the brook Kishon.

We halted at mid-day in the market-place of the village of Mejd-el-Kouroum, the headquarters of this subsidiary family of Druses. Though we were already hungry and very thirsty, it had been our intention to continue so far as Haifa, or Acre, at least; but it was impossible to resist the bright eyes of the maidens at the well. The Druses are

a sort of Puritans among Syrian peoples, and the men are not expected to pamper their flesh with wine or tobacco, nor their women to corrupt it further by the exhibition of their limbs in silks and trinkets. The girls of Mejd-el-Kouroum, however, do not forswear the wearing of gold coins in their dark hair and countless bracelets along their arms. With enormous urns of water on their heads they stand chattering for hours by the well and then go off to their homes at length, swaying slightly like birch saplings. They have teeth whiter than any white doves in a dove-cot. Their feet are small, with silver anklets clasping them. They have bright eyes. The daughters of Druses should not have such bright eyes. They bade us enter a Khan, a square house without beauty, in the open space fronting the fountain. So we sat down upon stools and they disposed themselves, old and young, about us on mats. We slaked our thirst in great tumblers of white *leben*, which is thickly curdled goat's milk, not any whiter than the teeth of these maidens. They brought us eggs also, and thin rounds of unleavened bread so that we might celebrate a belated Passover. They stared about us and whispered and smiled as if we were the first visitors to penetrate the seclusion of that land. An old woman in a corner, her hair and the palms of her hands dyed bright-red with henna, darned a hole in a shabby piece of blue cloth, with fingers nimble as mice. She had not less nimbly painted the rims of her eyes. She was the presiding genius of the place, though she talked little. Coffee, she commanded. Coffee was brought—less coffee than an elixir. And it seemed to me that though much might be said for my race, the Jews, it could not be doubted that they sucked tea through cubes of sugar; whereas this people produced this thing, this coffee. A liquid it was not, for it was not merely fluid. Nor was it a solid, for you did not divide it with a spoon. A gas almost, an emanation.

No, the Hittites of the valley of olives must abide here. The Jew has not set his foot in this place, so that it is excluded from the prophecy. They must abide here, the girls with such bright eyes, the young men with their neat hands, and the mysterious old lady directing them as they draw water in the well or distil coffee in the inner chamber, whilst she sits silently in the corner, on her heap of rugs, crowned with her crown of flaming henna hair.

While we were sipping our coffee, the *mukhtar* of the village came in. He is a sort of mayor, the representative of the villagers in matters pertaining to the Government. He emphasized the impression we had all along received of the remoteness of these people, so helpless he looked, so forlorn, with an official document in his hand. He might have been more at home, one thought, with a clay tablet, in the manner of the earlier Hittites. He turned the document right and left, under and over. It was, we discovered, a "Summons to Parties," requesting the poor puzzled gentleman to appear in a civil action at Acre. He had not himself sinned. One of the villagers had not paid his taxes. The *mukhtar*, however, was responsible. He looked at us helplessly, and then looked down at the document again with the same sort of tired distaste as the goat and the ass had manifested for their equally sapless stalks. He sat down to a large tumbler of *leben*, in which he proceeded to curdle his sorrows. We asked him what he would think if a Jewish colony should establish itself in the more barren steadings of his valley.

"Jews?" he asked vaguely. "Oh yes, Jews!" he said.

We recalled the reported fulminations of the Arabs upon hearing the news of a Jewish Homeland to be established in Palestine. We recalled the reports of Arab "pogroms" of Jews in Jaffa and Jerusalem. We did not

doubt them. We merely realized how factitious they were, what deliberate mischief.

"Jews!" said the *mukhtar*. The news might just have percolated to him through his olive-groves that a wandering tribe, Chabiri by name (to us known as Hebrews), after wandering about the Sinai desert for forty years, had at last been sighted in Moab, on the further side of Jordan. And how would it please him if a Jewish colony established itself here? Oh yes, why not? But it would be difficult. You see, the lands are divided into small parcels. There would be more difficulty with these—the ones from England. He tapped the document in his hand resentfully. Perhaps, sometime . . . it was all on the knees of Allah. At this moment I drew a notebook from my pocket, as unostentatiously as I might, in order to make a note or two, and trace the line of a face or an arm, perhaps. But the movement had not escaped the eyes of the old woman. The girls prattled on, she pondered me with her eyes. Then she uttered a word again. A girl rose and went out into the village. She came back a minute later with a small child, sniffing and wheezing, and set the child before me. I looked up from my notebook, puzzled.

"Cure her!" bade the old woman. My friend interpreted.

"But what . . . I mean how . . ."

"Don't you see? You're a doctor. What other explanation can there be for you, with that notebook? And those horn-rimmed glasses? Cure her!"

"But I . . . Tell her . . ." I proceeded to remonstrate. . . .

"But you must! Do something professional!" It seemed impossible to avoid a white hypocrisy. It would have been wicked. The girls, the *mukhtar*, the coffee-maker, stared at me with gaping mouths. The old woman waited. I put my hand out vaguely towards the child's wrist, who thereon emitted a loud howl, repeated at once in the further room by the goat whinnying, the ass braying, and the clucking of all the hens.

"Quiet!" bade the old woman.

The child stopped abruptly, like the ticking of a watch when you hurl the watch against a wall. I felt her pulse. That certainly was proper. I placed my hand on her brow. I warmed to my task. I had, after all, certain medical qualifications. They had given me, at the age of fifteen, a Boy Scout's First Aid Certificate. My conscience shuddered a little. I stifled it. How many of our afflictions are cured rather by the awe of the trappings of medicine than by its pure science? I had a vision of myself on a high chair in a tall dark expensive room, of the moaning of innumerable wheels, of blue lights fleeing out of my fingertips, sparks, cracklings, more wheels, more sparks. Alas, that I had no such equipment in the valley of olives. But I could feel a pulse and contemplate a watch with the next man. And could it be doubted that quinine would be of use in a case of slight fever and sniffing? "Quinine!" I bade, the same being brought from the minute medical store in the pocket of my ruck-sack.

"Bring Ali!" ordered the old woman. Ali was brought, a manifest case of stomach-ache. Or if it was a more subtle complaint, as it might have been, can it have harmed him that his chest was tapped (I had grown so bold as that) and *cascara sagrada* prescribed for him? A pageant of the village sick defiled before me. A case of jaundice was amongst these—if a face dirty-yellow as the hide of a smoked ham is a certain symptom. I declared, regretfully, this was beyond the scope of my ministrations. This young man must betake himself to Haifa, where there are doctors of the Jews.

"The Jews!" the *mukhtar* caught up. "They will

have jaundice-curers amongst them, if they come into our valley?"

"There certainly were jaundice-curers in the other valleys!" I said.

"But none of these are of help?" intimated the yellow sufferer wistfully. He pointed to my diminished phials of quinine, aspirin, and *cascara sagrada*. There was least left of the quinine, for that could be harmful in no circumstances in this region; there was rather less aspirin than *cascara sagrada*, for I had discovered earlier, among the Tunisian tribes, that aspirin was more potent in its good suggestions than the other drug in so much as it was more mysterious in its effects.

"And now," said my friend, "we must be going!" There was a jingle of coins in his pockets.

"No! no!" cried the old woman, rising from her heap of rugs. "Give me!" She seized the remaining phials, stuffed them into her bosom, and squatted upon her rugs again.

"Let them go!" she said. She turned her mind in upon itself. We were dismissed from her world.

The bright-eyed maidens gathered about us. They had white teeth, like the snows of Hermon. The bracelets clanked upon their naked ankles—these lovely daughters of the Hittites, at the heart of the valley of grey olives. We went on our way again, down to the coast-land, the edge of the middle sea.

MUSIC

SIBELIUS: OR MUSIC AND THE FUTURE

THE most important event, by a long way, of the present orchestral season so far has undoubtedly been the performance under Sir Henry Wood on December 8th at one of the Philharmonic Concerts of the Seventh Symphony of Sibelius, the most scandalously neglected, in this country at least, of all contemporary composers. The reasons for this neglect are not far to seek. In the first place his output consists for the most part of large orchestral works requiring long preparatory study and an amount of careful rehearsal which is rarely obtainable under present conditions. Secondly, his music makes little or no appeal to conductors since it affords them few opportunities for displaying their own personalities or for impressing audiences with their virtuosity, demanding instead a capacity for self-effacement and a degree of interpretative sympathy and insight which few of them possess. Again, the entire absence of sensationalism in this music renders it unattractive to audiences whose palates have been vitiated by a century of excessive indulgence in sonorous alcohol, and it has been almost entirely ignored until quite recently by the critics, mainly because it lacks to a great extent any of those strikingly noticeable stylistic features or methods of procedure that can be analyzed, classified, and pigeon-holed, or summed up in a trite and comprehensive formula. Indeed, it is probably not going too far to say that it is more difficult to write about the music of Sibelius than about that of any other modern composer, but neither this nor the fact that I have already had occasion to do so in these columns a year ago *à propos* of the performance of his Sixth Symphony, is sufficient to justify one in neglecting to draw attention once more to one of the greatest composers of modern times, and almost the only one of them of whom it can truthfully be said that every fresh work from his pen reveals a new aspect of his genius and serves to increase his already impressive stature and eminence. This latest example of his art is no exception; both in boldness and vigour of conception and in sureness of execution it is equal to anything that he has

yet written, while in sheer originality it is in no way inferior even to his great Fourth Symphony, which probably represents the high-water mark of his achievement up to the present time.

Quite apart from its intrinsic value and interest, however, the work of Sibelius is a highly significant symptom and a historical event of the first importance. Generally speaking, the whole history of music during the last hundred years or so has been one of idiomatic development and expansion, a progressive enrichment of every kind of tonal resource—melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and colouristic—accompanied by a corresponding weakening and impoverishment on the more abstract and intellectual side of the art. The beginnings of this tendency are to be seen in the music of Bellini, Chopin, Weber, and Berlioz, as clearly as its end is to be seen in that of Strauss, Schönberg, Bartók, and Stravinsky. In other words, the art of these latter composers, despite its factitious appearance of novelty, is in reality nothing more than the continuation and final exhaustion of the Romantic impulse, the end of the old rather than the beginning of the new, as it is commonly represented to be. That it is impossible to go any further in this direction can be almost mathematically demonstrated; all notes of the scale have now been sounded together, every species of melodic progression, embracing the widest possible leaps and the most unfamiliar and exotic intervals, have been employed, every conceivable colouristic device and instrumental combination has been systematically exploited. The ultimate confines of musical language have been reached, and its remotest possibilities exhausted. There is obviously nothing further to be done in the direction of idiomatic expansion, short of the adoption of third or quarter tones, and there is no reason to suppose that any such development will take place in our day, if ever.

At the same time, there is nothing in all romantic or modern music to compare with that of Bach, Mozart, or the later Beethoven, as regards depth of intellectual content or formal subtlety and complexity; and while most modern composers still continue desperately seeking for some hitherto unexploited resource, some thrill or sensation not previously experienced, Sibelius, almost alone amongst them, seems to have realized, consciously or unconsciously, that a movement in this direction was not merely desirable but absolutely necessary if music was to emerge from the *impasse* in which it has been confined of recent years. In all his most characteristic work we find a deliberate avoidance of anything in the nature of novelty or experiment for their own sake; his manner of writing is always fundamentally in accordance with tradition, without ever becoming timidly reactionary like that of Brahms, however, or slavishly imitative of the older masters, like that of Reger. Together with this restraint and sobriety of idiom, moreover, we find a refinement and complexity of form which have no parallel in modern music, and can only be compared to those of the last works of Beethoven in the music of the nineteenth century. There is, indeed, a more than superficial resemblance between them, for Sibelius's discardment in his later symphonies of the old formal convention of two main themes or groups of themes out of which the movement is generally constructed, is to a great extent only the application to symphonic writing of the revolutionary formal innovations introduced by Beethoven in his last quartets and piano sonatas, which the master did not live long enough to apply to orchestral forms. The resemblance is not merely formal, however; the underlying spirit of Sibelius's later work, with its depth of thought and concentrated intensity of expression is recognizably similar to that of Beethoven's last period, and justify us in regarding his four last symphonies not merely as the greatest modern achievements in this form, but also as a significant index to the direction in which music is most likely to develop in the immediate future.

CECIL GRAY.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

MR. H. W. GRIBBLE'S "March Hares" at the Ambassadors Theatre is, in many ways, a very brilliant affair, which gives the onlooker an intellectual stimulus all too rare in the theatre. From the broadest point of view, it may be styled Mr. Shaw brought up to date. Hence it is for the moment more amusing than some of Mr. Shaw's social comedies, though one may doubt whether in the end it will wear as well. More cynical and less didactic than Mr. Shaw, Mr. Gribble is probably also less theatrical in the good sense of the word. The plot is an elaborated sketch of the personal relations of four people in one house during twenty-four hours, and provides some excellent dialogue at the exact point where comedy tumbles dangerously into farce. Whatever it was all exactly about, it is difficult to say. Mr. Gribble has, for his own ends, adopted the fashionable Cave psychology, but his play bears as little resemblance to life as do those of his illustrious master. "March Hares" is full of "fat" parts. The short-sighted master cave man, a Don Juan *malgré lui*, was played with great brilliance by Mr. Leslie Banks, while Mr. Ronald Simpson was extremely charming as one who would be a cave man, but cannot. This is emphatically a play in which the men act better than the women. Mr. Nicholas Hannen produced the play with vivacity, but was obviously handicapped by the incredibly stupid set with which he was provided. Where the whole of an elaborate social comedy is played in one room, it is better that this room should not be constructed by nature's journeymen. The builder (*sic*) of the set is mentioned on the programme after the firm that provides the chocolates! Yet obviously the stage should not only be agreeable and practical (it was neither), but suggest the whole spiritual atmosphere of its inhabitants before the play begins. It must condition the whole production. Atrocious sets are also in use at "On Approval." Apparently even the more intellectual managers think the public is blind as well as deaf.

"Sylvia," a comedy with music, adapted from the play of Mr. St. John Ervine (at the Vaudeville) is so much better than most entertainments of the kind that one is left with the ungrateful regret that it is not still better. It is really a comic opera, not a musical comedy, enriched with a plot, real characters, and a point of view. It would, however, have been worth while for the adapter to take a little more trouble with the dialogue, and also with the construction of the play. Having cut with so much rubbish, he might well have cut with the chorus, which served a useful purpose on only one occasion, and during all the rest of the play merely got in the way, particularly as they were not sufficiently skilled to give exhibitions of ballroom dancing, which seems to be the only point of a chorus. The acting was an enormous improvement on the usual musical comedy standard. Miss Iris Hoey played very amusingly in a real part (a ridiculous "star"), and Miss Margaret Yarde very deservedly brought the house down in her song as a leader of Girl Guides. Mr. Ivor Barnard (deserting unsuccessful love in the suburbs) blazed as a vulgarian and business manager. Mr. Thesiger's was a part with which more trouble might have been taken. He had to make bricks without straw (at which indeed he shines), when he might have been presented with a richer personality. But "Sylvia" is, on the whole, a delightful entertainment which may be commended to all who like musical comedy and to a good many who do not.

It is difficult to criticize "The Caveman" (the new production at the Savoy Theatre), save in the familiar phrase, "Those who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like." It is clean, wholesome, cheery, and good-natured (qualities I detest), while the lovemaking is so like life that one feels more uncomfortable than at the most indecent Restoration comedy. This artless little farce tells of an incompetent, sensitive Mr. Polly sort of chemist, who is given a pair of magic braces by somebody out of a mystery play by Sir James Barrie, with which he can face fearful odds. With this theme are mingled the bracing loves of the chemist's daughter and the son of the squire (a

recently enriched family). A little comic drunkenness relieves the boredom of the scene. The cast is worthy of a better cause, Mr. Horace Hodges, Miss Kate Cutler, and Miss Louise Hampton doing their best to create the illusion that "The Caveman" is funny.

Since Jerome K. Jerome's last play, "The Soul of Nicholas Snyders," now running at the Everyman, has been put on at Christmas time one must not, I suppose, probe too deep or make the comparison with Mr. Richard Hughes' brilliant "comedy of good and evil" which at once presents itself—especially as in it Mr. Richard Goolden again appears in a Satanic rôle. So let us ignore the metaphysics and record that here is agreeable moral physic, suitable for all but the ultra-sophisticated. Its lesson might perhaps have been given a nicer point had not the old-style actor in Mr. Wilfred Shine prompted him to make old Snyders very nearly as lovable and certainly as entertaining in his Scrooge-like habit as he is during his temporary exchange of soul with the more amiable sea-captain of Mr. Ion Swinley, and had this phase of Mr. Swinley's part been indicated by actor and author by some more subtle means than the reproduction in manner and sentiment of the first-act Snyders. But perhaps this lack of subtlety is all to the good, for we are judging the play as a fairy-tale, and niceties in such magic medicine might easily be out of place. No need with this medicine for a lump of sugar afterwards, for sugar is well mixed with the potion. And where can one find sweeter or more competent acting than that of little Marie Morden-Wright as the child who finally puts Snyders in the way of making his change of soul permanent?

The performances given last week by the British National Opera Company of "Figaro" and "The Magic Flute" at the Golders Green Hippodrome were both highly appreciated by a large and enthusiastic audience. In the former, the parts of Figaro and Susanna were admirably taken by Mr. Herbert Langley and Miss Kathlyn Hilliard; Miss Doris Lemon as Cherubino made a charming and sprightly page; and Mr. Eugene Goossens deserves special congratulation for his masterly conducting of the music. That a performance of so difficult a work as "The Magic Flute" should be in all respects satisfactory was perhaps too much to expect, but if there were roughnesses and deficiencies in the rendering of some of the parts the effect on the whole was remarkably good. Mr. William Michael made an excellent Papageno, Miss Noel Eadie as Queen of the Night sang her difficult part effectively, and the work of the orchestra on both evenings was excellent.

It is hard to see how anyone, even of the most delicate religious susceptibilities, could be shocked by the American film of the life of Christ, "The King of Kings," which is now being shown at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The producer, Mr. Cecil B. de Mille, has been so determined to be "reverent" that he has produced a film of almost painful inoffensiveness: so anxious was he to be perfectly conventional in his treatment of the figure of Christ that he shows Him almost entirely without character of any kind, so "meek and mild" that He can scarcely be said to have a human existence. Every possible opportunity to be sentimental is seized upon and made the most of. Nor could he resist the temptation to introduce Mary Magdalene as the typical film "vamp" amid all the trappings of Hollywood luxury. Mr. de Mille, being neither a religious enthusiast nor an artist, fails to make the story impressive: as a commercial film-producer, however, he is skilful, and many of the individual scenes (the raising of Lazarus, the trial before Pilate, the crowds in the Temple, and the Crucifixion) are very well contrived. The chronological order is sometimes confusing. The opportunity for playing some good music was almost entirely neglected; the programme consisting mainly of familiar hymn-tunes.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" (at the London Pavilion) proclaims itself unhesitatingly as "the World's Greatest Motion Picture"; we are told that it cost £600,000 to produce, and that 28,000 sticks of grease paint were used. Commercially, perhaps, it was worth it: artistically, it is

doubtful. A little more simplicity might have achieved just as good a result. Mrs. Beecher Stowe, whose name is not mentioned in the programme, might be a little surprised at the version of her story here presented: why is it that a film-producer, when for once he gets hold of a good story (and in this case, a story perfectly suitable for the films) must needs try and improve upon it? Is it from some muddle-headed kind of patriotism that the Civil War is made to begin in the middle of the book, and that the soldiers of the Northern Army arrive, not, it is true, quite in time to save Uncle Tom's life, but to unite Eliza and her family? Yet the film has great merits. The acting and photography are excellent, the spectacular scenes, such as Eliza's escape with her child across the ice-floes, and the scenes of the slave-ships on the Mississippi, very convincingly shown. Little Eva, the angel child, is a tit-bit for a producer; in the film she wears a halo even *before* her death. There is a prelude and entr'acte by coloured singers, and Mr. James B. Lowe, the coloured actor who takes the part of "Uncle Tom," appears in person.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, December 24th.—

Pantomime, at the Children's Theatre.

"Cinderella," at the Palladium.

"Where the Rainbow Ends," at the Holborn Empire.

Monday, December 26th.—

The Mystery Play, "9.45," at Ambassadors.

"The Black Spider," at the Lyric.

"The Queen of Hearts," at the Lyceum.

"The Windmill Man," at the Victoria Palace.

"Cinderella," at the Chelsea Palace.

"Bluebell in Fairyland," at the New Scala.

"Treasure Island," at Golders Green Hippodrome.

"Humpty Dumpty," at the King's, Hammersmith.

"Dick Whittington," at the Elephant.

"Annual Circus," at the Crystal Palace.

Thursday, December 29th.—

The Interlude Theatre Guild and The Arts Theatre Club in "Tod the Tailor," by W. Griffin (December 29th-January 3rd).

OMICRON.

ESCAPADE

"Yes, but in six months' time," you said,
Will you . . . ? " And thereat prudently staid.
Admirable tact. In six months' time
Will a Brighton sea-front seem sublime?
Will the rain beat hard on the window-pane,
And we be oblivious of wind and rain?
Will your young visage smile back at mine,
Blue as the morning, merry as wine,
Or shall I appear, as alas! I can,
A cultured, intelligent, middle-aged man?

Too old to believe that the dawn can last,
Too young to live by the light of the past,
Faithless to-morrow, dead yesterday,
With deliberate wisdom I thrust away.
Bless you darling for all you give:
A spangle of ecstasy caught in that sieve
Through which Time shovels as best he can
That singular mixture of gold and bran
Which is life; for a moment of realized joy,
Appraised by a critic but lived by a boy;
For a time-worn poet's bewildered tears;
For the clock put back by twenty years;
For making the truth again come true;
For passion, for beauty, for lust, for you.

"Yes, but in six months' time," you say.
Darling, yes, but this is to-day.
And here you stand, slim, subtle, unique
With that ultra-mysterious curl on your cheek,
And the suit that I think looks best from behind,
And me very much like the rest of my kind.
And in six months' time if we're both alive
I shall . . . well, you will be twenty-five.

C.

THEATRES.

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DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, 6 to 10.30.)

December 26th, 27th & 28th. JACKIE COOGAN in "JOHNNY GET YOUR

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December 29th, 30th & 31st. BUSTER KEATON in "COLLEGE"; VIOLA

DANA and Vera Gordon in "KOSHER KITTY KELLY," etc.

On the Stage: Kathleen Laffa, Mezzo-Soprano.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

SHORT STORIES

MOST publishers will tell you that the short story is not nearly as popular as the novel. I have always thought this to be a strange eccentricity of the reading public. For it is only in book form that short stories cannot complete in popularity with novels. It seems difficult to explain why hundreds of people enjoy short stories when they are in monthly magazines, but not when they are printed in books. For those, however, who like short stories in any form I can recommend three books which have just been published. "Great Stories of All Nations," collected and edited by Maxim Lieber and Blanche C. Williams (Harrap, 8s. 6d.), contains 158 stories of thirty-four different countries in 1,132 pages. It is a remarkable collection, beginning with an Egyptian story, "The Doomed Prince," from a papyrus in the British Museum, dating from about 1600 B.C., and ending with "The Wanderers," by the Roumanian Michael Sadoveanu, which was published in 1921. Nearly all the greatest story-writers are represented, the most curious omission being Henry James. The second book, "Great Short Novels of the World," collected and edited by Barrett H. Clark (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.), raises the difficult question of the difference between a short novel and a long short story, to which I shall return in a moment. The book contains thirty-five stories of twenty different countries in 1,316 pages. It, too, is an admirable collection. Lastly, Messrs. Chatto & Windus publish a collection of twenty-five of the stories of perhaps the greatest of all short story writers, "Select Tales of Tchekhov," translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett (7s. 6d.).

* * *

The second book, as I said, raises the question of the difference between the novel and the short story. Mr. Clark himself, in "A Note to Critics," raises the question rather deprecatingly, and says that the Note is not written for the "general reader" who "will open this book for the sake of the stories, without bothering to discover the reasons why I put in this one instead of that." But surely if the short story is really different from the novel, it will have a different effect upon the general reader. The general reader is not nearly as unintelligent as some of his spokesmen would have us believe, and many plain men, who are not literary critics, would be interested to know what is the fundamental difference in the two forms which makes him prefer a novel to a book of short stories. There is a real difference. Chekhov's story "The Darling" and Mr. Wells's "The Stolen Bacillus," which are included in the first book, are typical short stories of widely differing kinds. One tells the story of a woman's life, the other an incident of an hour or two. Neither of them, either in their form or in their effect upon the reader, has any resemblance to a book which is indisputably a novel, whether it deals with an incident in a man's life like Trollope's "The Warden," or the whole of many people's lives like Tolstoi's "War and Peace." You can compare "The Warden" with "War and Peace," but you cannot begin to compare "The Darling" with it, just as you cannot compare a sonnet with an epic. Most of the short "novels" in Mr. Clark's book can be compared with "The Darling," but not with "The Warden" or "War and Peace," because they are

short stories, not short novels. Pirandello's "In Silence" and Mr. Somerset Maugham's "Rain," for instance, are typical short stories. The story writer differs from the novelist because he has a different form in his mind, and therefore regards his material from a different point of view. He has a perfectly definite and circumscribed frame into which that material has to go. His subject is always an incident cut clean out of life and fitted into that frame. It may be the incident of a moment or it may be the whole life of a man or woman, but in the latter case the life itself is regarded as an incident. It is complete in itself; the picture ends where the frame begins. It is often, as its name implies, merely a story; for the pure story, the tale which begins "There was once . . ." is always incidental, something in a frame, something cut out of life, something which can be told at a sitting round a fire. But the novel never has this feeling of completeness and sharpness at both ends; its content is never viewed as an incident; it is not "about something." The short story is like a photograph where the novel is like a film.

* * *

There are cases in which the work may seem to be on the borderline between the novel and the short story. Mere length, for instance, tends to destroy the sense of completeness and immediacy and sharpness, and so can turn what might have been a good short story into an inferior novel. The greatest short story in these three books is, I think, Turgenev's "A Lear of the Steppes," which Mr. Barrett Clark includes as a short novel. It is only its length which makes him call it a novel. Turgenev emphasizes the fact that it is a short story by the fifteen lines of introduction and the two lines of epilogue. They would be silly in the case of a novel; they are of importance in the case of a short story, particularly a very long short story, because they help to give it the sense of incidentalism and completeness. "A Lear of the Steppes" is probably about as long as a short story can be without becoming a novel; one can imagine it a little longer, but it would then be a very interesting but disappointing novel.

* * *

One curious fact revealed by these books is that the story remained pretty much the same from 1600 B.C. until the nineteenth century and then changed. For about 3,500 years the story-teller wanted either to point a moral or to interest his hearers by the strangeness, the romance, or the humour of *events*. Really Voltaire's "Jeannot and Colin," included in the first book, might have been written in 2000 B.C., and so might Steele's "Tom Varnish." The ancient Egyptian sitting on the banks of the Nile might have listened to and have understood and enjoyed them. But Chekhov's "The Beauties" or "The Lady with the Dog," or Schnitzler's "Flowers," or Mr. Lawrence's "Two Blue Birds" would simply have meant nothing to him. They are stories not about events, but about things inside the mind, and the psychological subtlety, which is a commonplace to us, would not have been intelligible to more than two or three people who lived before the nineteenth century.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

HAYDON

The Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846). Edited by ALEXANDER P. D. PENROSE. (Bell. 12s. 6d.)

Autobiography of Benjamin Robert Haydon. Introduction and Epilogue by EDMUND BLUNDEN. The World's Classics. (Oxford University Press. 2s.)

BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON probably desired immortality more intensely than any man of his time. Whenever he saw a large bare wall in a public building he thought that this should be covered with a painting of a prodigious historical event, and that he was the man to paint it. For thirty years he pestered politicians to be allowed to decorate the Houses of Parliament in this way, but since no one would listen to him he divided his time between quarrelling with Academicians, borrowing money, keeping bailiffs out of his house, and working in spurts of demonic energy to fill canvas after enormous canvas with grandiose representations of scenes of glory and horror. When, in 1845, artists were selected for the mural decorations at Westminster, Haydon was not included. He determined to produce a rival set of decorations, celebrating the triumph of limited monarchy. In 1846 he hired a room in the Egyptian Hall to exhibit some of these; next door was an exhibition of Tom Thumb. In a week, 12,000 people paid to see Tom Thumb, 133½ paid to see "The Banishment of Aristides" and "The Burning of Rome." Haydon closed his exhibition and shot himself.

Most of the area which Haydon covered with paint has disappeared. He was not a persecuted genius painting in a new way pictures which a later generation would honour; he was a violent egotist painting in an old way, and, by the only standards which he would admit, doing it rather badly. Yet the immortality for which he raved may yet be his. The pictures which lit such a furnace in his mind were mostly dead when he brought them to canvas. But he himself was painfully alive, and, as might be expected, he overflowed in a diary. He even found time to write an autobiography of his early life, and this, together with a full selection from his journals, has fortunately been preserved in Taylor's edition. Haydon destroyed himself because he thought he had a genius for expression in paint. Being wedded to High Art, he disdained to resort professionally to the pen. Yet it is clear that his flamboyant imagination was nourished on books, and properly expressible in words. There is plenty of evidence that he was a splendid talker, and no one who has been harassed and irritated, antagonized and entertained by his diaries will deny that he could write. To read these pitiful documents is to be embarrassed with the mixed feelings with which one listens to a man proclaiming, in a loud, excited voice, a deep but imaginary grievance. This fellow, one feels, would be the best of company if he would talk of something else; there may be something in all this, for he is talented, he is suffering and unhappy; and yet how loudly the bee buzzes in his bonnet, what a monotonous, ranting bore he can be; if only one could show him—and one realizes with a pang that this hot, deluded brain was cold eighty years ago, and that its crazy pursuit of fame has produced a famous contribution to the literature of failure.

In this edition Mr. Penrose prints the autobiography in full, and disengages the most interesting parts of the journals from the mass of records of Haydon's complicated endeavours to borrow from Peter to pay Paul. Mr. Penrose's interpolations are very concise and very infrequent: he seems to say, "This is Haydon, make what sense you can of him." It is good practice in several arts to construct for oneself, from a study of the design which Haydon so valiantly exhibits, the other side of the medal. But the time is surely ripe for a biography. There is enough material in this book alone for a most interesting study of the psychology of megalomania. How far, for instance, is it safe to argue that the romantic excess of Haydon's mind was so nourished in a childhood dominated by the Napoleonic wars that he was already, at the time of his first collision with the Academy, a little mad? This would account for the fact that he was never so happy as when he imagined that someone had done him a mortal injury. It would explain his obsession for Napoleon and Wellington, his lust for scenes of hectic grandeur. It would

explain why he always answered the rejection of a picture by ordering an even larger canvas, and deliberately preferred to plunge hopelessly into debt rather than earn a mediocre living by painting small portraits of small men. But it would not account for those delightful stretches of his journal in which, when the thundercloud lifts from his mind, he blocks in, with a few strokes of his pen, a sunny, humorous portrait of an acquaintance. For this book is almost as full of the early Victorian world as of Haydon. Since he sponged on the aristocracy, pestered the politicians, vilified his brother artists, was intimate with a wide circle of literary celebrities, spent some time in prison, and more in dodging the duns, he touched life from top to bottom. It is, I think, very significant that the men who were most friendly towards Haydon, and most believed in him, were literary men. No doubt Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Scott, and Lamb put up with the bee in Haydon's bonnet for the sake of the brains and high spirits which it also contained. But why did they think him a great painter? A biographer is certainly needed.

BARRINGTON GATES.

FICTION

Mr. Weston's Good Wine. By T. F. POWYS. (Chatto & Windus. 15s.)

The Wild Body: A Soldier of Humour, and Other Stories. By WYNDHAM LEWIS. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

Death Comes for the Archbishop. By WILLA CATHER. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

The Midnight Folk. By JOHN MASEFIELD. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

For Maurice: Five Unlikely Stories. By VERNON LEE. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.)

Selina Pennaluna. By RUTH MANNING SANDERS. (Christophers. 7s. 6d.)

The Living Buddha. By PAUL MORAND. Translated from the French by ERIC SUTTON. (Knopf. 7s. 6d.)

In fullness of conception and sustained imagination "Mr. Weston's Good Wine" is probably the best story Mr. Powys has yet written. It is also by far the most balanced and satisfying. All Mr. Powys's stories have suggested allegory. They do not describe actual life, but rather evoke a dream image more simple than the reality, in which good and evil are seen more clearly confronted than the realistic imagination sees them. In the present story Mr. Powys openly adopts the allegory and employs it with great effect. Mr. Weston is a name for God, and his wines, of two kinds, are Love and Death. He comes at seven o'clock one evening to an English village; all the clocks stop, time is changed to eternity, and various strange things happen to the villagers. The rector begins to believe in God, and dies in peace, Mrs. Vosper is carried down to Hell, water is turned into wine, and a young girl has intercourse with an angel of whom she has dreamt. Once more in this story, in short, the author is exclusively concerned with the realities of good and evil, and the world he describes is not the actual one in which these things are inextricably mixed, but a simple, schematic, intense world in which they are separated and set in clear opposition, a world which contains heaven and hell, and contains nothing much between them. But if Mr. Powys's statement of the problem is simplified, so are his terms. Goodness is a simple thing to him, evil, too, a simple thing; and it is their very obviousness, their immediacy, that gives us such an intense awareness of them in this story. For a simplification such as Mr. Powys's seems to wipe away all the inessentials which stand between us and this particular kind of truth; we feel that he brings us into the presence of powers which the generality of writers refuse to see. This is Mr. Powys's great virtue; his great fault is that he does not see those things objectively at all, but through a violently idiosyncratic temperament; and the truth of his portraiture is confused beneath an habitual and sometimes absurd over-emphasis. There is another limitation inherent in an imagination so simple as Mr. Powys's: that it cannot admit of much variety of invention in the author. If people are simply good or bad, the writer cannot do much more than set them in a few typical situations to which their response is already half-known; he will inevitably tend to repeat those situations. Consequently, even in the present story, the most various he has written, the author has not

been able to avoid an occasional monotony. But his virtues by far outweigh his faults; there are beautiful and inimitable pages in "Mr. Weston's Good Wine"; the whole is executed with skill and power; and the quality of the imagination, though exaggerated, is profound.

"The Wild Body" is both a brilliant and a disappointing book. The preamble to the first story and the essay on laughter which comes later lead us to expect something remarkable in the humorous style. But after giving us a comprehensive if far too brief theory of humour, Mr. Lewis provides only a few fragments to illustrate it. The short stories in this volume have little completeness in themselves; they are rather incidents which might appear in a longer work, sketches which might take on full significance by being subordinated to a larger unity. In quality they are unequal: "A Soldier of Humour" is somewhat forced throughout and disappointing in its conclusion; "Bestre," on the other hand, is a brilliant, subtle, and inimitable sketch. Mr. Lewis's style, equally, oscillates between pure excellence and mere badness. The living and supple prose of "Bestre" is offset by the falsetto violence of the description of Ker-Orr in the first story, beginning: "I am a large blond clown," a passage which has parallels in other parts of the book. The faults in these stories seem to be due to the author's too insistent consciousness of the function of humour as he defines it. The less successful of them are consequently more like specimens of humour than works of humour. In these Mr. Lewis is not merely content to tell the æsthetic truth; he must make a point at the same time. Here, as well as in his exuberant style and something grotesque and nightmarish in his humour, Mr. Lewis has a distinct resemblance to Mr. Chesterton. But his mind is obviously a far more powerful one, and the stories in this volume, indeed, have not so much the appearance of expressing it as of being fragments left lying by it here and there. Remarkable as proofs of a powerful talent, they are unsatisfactory in themselves.

"Death Comes for the Archbishop" is probably the best book that Miss Cather has written yet. It is the story of the labours of two French missionaries in New Mexico, and the action covers almost a half-century. Everything—the hardships, the temptations, the pleasures of the two French Catholics, the lives of the Mexicans, the vast distances of New Mexico which have to be traversed on horseback—is set down with extreme bareness and simplicity. Nothing is overstressed, yet the effect of the whole is moving and powerful. Miss Cather seems to let the events and the characters speak for themselves, clothing them only in her transparent and beautiful style. The construction of the story, loose and casual in appearance, is in reality full of skill, and the incidents are chosen with unfailing judgment, and timed with studied art. The book is the highest achievement so far of a conscientious and fastidious writer.

There are charming incidents in Mr. Masfield's dream story, "The Midnight Folk," abundance of invention and rapidity of action, but the whole seems to be too easily done; one feels no stress of imagination behind it, and the effect accordingly is somewhat empty. One imagines that the author simply invented the story as he went along, discarding the possibilities of any situation when a new possibility or a fresh situation occurred to him, imagining new characters and dropping old ones, when it suited him, and in general pleasing himself rather than thinking of the reader. The result is that the story has not that logic of fantasy which chiefly gives this kind of literature what significance and interest it has. Our attention can scarcely be held by a tale in which simply anything at all may happen; we demand that it should happen, at least, in a particular way. Mr. Masfield does not seem to have cared what would happen or how it would happen; there is no permanent appeal made to our interest, but only a succession of separate appeals, and in the pauses between them one's mind is inclined to stray elsewhere.

"Vernon Lee's" five "unlikely stories," "For Maurice," are deliciously written, wittily or farcically artificial, and of their difficult kind excellent. Their themes range from Tannhäuser to Don Juan, and they never attempt to deviate into reality. But the assurance with which the mood of intellectual farce or fantasy is preserved is consummate, and a real achievement of literary taste. The author's

invention is both daring and effective, and the whole book is admirable light reading such as only an experienced and accomplished writer could have produced.

It is difficult to credit that Mrs. Manning Sanders is the author of "Selina Pennaluna." Again and again a passage makes one wonder whether the author intends the story as a farce or as a serious, tragic work. The heroine's suicide, the hero's remorse, the destruction of the last representative of his race: it is precisely such things as these that strike the highest note of absurdity. But style, characterization, dialogue, everything is melodramatically exaggerated and unreal. There were meretricious elements in the author's "Waste Corner," published some time ago; nevertheless, it was a novel of considerable promise. The present story is little better than incoherent melodrama.

"The Living Buddha" is a very amusing and sometimes moving study of the incompatibility between East and West. M. Morand conducts an Oriental prince to England, France, and America, and notes with great acuteness the responses his hero evokes. The book has some of the relentless glitter of the author's previous stories, but it has more understanding and intelligence. The wit seems to be improved by being made less obtrusive. The translation is excellent.

EDWIN MUIR.

AN EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT MAN

The Petty Papers. Some unpublished writings of Sir William Petty, from the Bowood Papers. Edited by the MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE. Two vols. (Constable. £2 12s. 6d.)

MR. LEONARD WOOLF has recently written an amusing article in these columns on the deficiencies and merits of reviewers, what is expected of them, and what they provide. No one has yet instituted an examination for reviewers, but in such an examination the Petty Papers might well be set as a compulsory question, and anyone who got Alpha would be qualified to review any book on any subject in any newspaper.

Sir William Petty was a very intelligent man, in an age when the level of intelligence was high. He touched life at many points. He was a landowner, a merchant, a mathematician, a statesman, a philosopher, a scientist, and many other things. Always very short-sighted, he hardly opened a book after he was twenty-five, and wrote a very sensible letter of protest to his friend Boyle, who was in the habit of reading twelve hours a day. His great "purblindness" stopped him not only reading, but writing, and his books consist of disjointed and almost illegible jottings on all subjects. His unwillingness or inability to read had its disadvantages, as he did not know what was going on round him, and he wasted his time on work already done by others.

He was liberal on nearly every point. He was in favour of religious teaching (Catholics, perhaps, excepted), hospitals, education, constitutional government, a moderation of Colbertian economics, and was, in fact, a genuine forerunner of the eighteenth century. He was in favour of increasing the population by every conceivable means, which led him into strange speculations.

"The way of marriage is now such that of one hundred capable women only thirty-two are married, and these thirty-two brought eleven children per annum. Whereas one hundred teeming women may well bring forty children per annum.

"Wherefore,

"1. Let it be no sin or shame for a woman to bring a child.

"2. Let there be places for women to lie down in.

"3. For keeping the child.

"4. Let there be a tax upon all men of between eighteen and sixty, and upon all women of between fifteen and forty-five, to defray the said charges of lying-in and nursing: and the tax on the women, but half that of the men."

"Over and above this general proposition: Let no woman, upon pain of being counted an whore admitt any man without an indenture of covenants concerning: 1. The time of cohabitation; (2) The allowance to the woman; (3) The disposal of the children and the power of inheritance, portion, name, &c."

It is hard to leave these visions for the Irish Land Register based on the Cromwellian Settlement, which was till recently in common use; his schemes for improving

military and naval ordnance; his passionate interest for attaching an exact meaning to words—particularly with reference to theology (Vol. I., p. 162)—and his continual plans for scientific dictionaries. He himself drew up an examination paper (Vol. II., p. 8), and a pretty stiff one it is, too, and of great interest in showing what man ought to know. There are twenty-three headings, beginning with algebra, geometry, decyphering, chess and cards. "Deducing consequences and doctrines from the Scriptures" comes last on the list, and the dead languages are not mentioned. Petty had a scientific and social mind. He wrote some pretty lines on his blindness at much the same date that a greater poet was busy on the same subject.

"Petty complains that Nature was unkind
In that she made him heavy-eyed and blind,
Never considering that the mighty three,
Fortune, Love, Justice, were more blind than he.
Nor that Prospective Eyed Prometheus might
For all his fortune blame alone his sight" (&c., &c.).

Petty was very popular at the Royal Society, and apparently much liked in general society. Two volumes of jottings cannot be read straight through, nor adequately analyzed in a review. But Petty showed that complete independence of mind which we associate with the Restoration. The men of the Restoration began life again at the beginning, and based themselves in science. Petty agreed with them, and had a scheme for everything, for he was as humane as he was exact. He once raised a woman from the dead, but refused to take credit for a miracle. The woman had been inadequately hanged. Lord Lansdowne, who edits the book very well indeed, reveals himself as a mine of various information.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

THE RIDDLE OF RUSSIA

The Catastrophe. By ALEXANDER F. KERENSKY. (Appleton. 15s.)
The Tragic Bride. By V. POLIAKOFF. (Appleton. 15s.)

HERE are two more interesting narratives that should help the historian of the future to solve the riddle of recent Russian events. In vivid, dramatic prose, M. Kerensky describes the part played by himself in the Revolution of 1917. He also gives us a lucid and convincing account of the circumstances that preceded it. He thinks that, had it not been for the war, the revolution would have broken out, at latest, in 1915. The war gave the old régime a last chance, which it failed to grasp, and M. Kerensky draws some graphic pictures of the political corruption and the appalling military and economic conditions that rendered inevitable the insurrection of 1917. His book deserves attention for two reasons. As a kaleidoscope of Russian life during the period covered it is uncommonly fascinating; and it throws important sidelights upon the inner working of events. A man on his defence is necessarily prejudiced. But, despite his fervent rhetoric, we feel that M. Kerensky is essentially sincere in his idealism, and that he did his utmost to prevent bloodshed and revenge, and to drive the revolutionary lava into moderate and constructive channels. He considers that the first tragic mistake was the failure of the Duma to remain formally in session on the fateful March 12th. Had it done so, divided counsels might have been obviated. As things happened, the Provisional Government was quickly faced with a rival in the Soviet of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, and soon the population, "never having participated in the government of the country and only now, for the first time, realizing its boundless power," became a chaos of "individual groups and classes," claiming "all rights but no obligations." Then came Leninism, which "represents the most complete political, social, and economic reaction, unprecedented in the history of Europe."

M. Kerensky's moderation is shown by his persistent attempts to safeguard the ex-Tsar and his family, and to secure their escape to England. His account of his visit to the late Emperor in confinement substantially agrees with the entry in the ex-Tsarina's diary describing that event. M. Kerensky, moreover, joins with M. Poliakoff in regarding the Tsar as a kindly, but weak, man. He combined, says M. Poliakoff, the theory of his divine sovereignty with a practical distaste for its obligations. He was always passionately in love with his wife, and from the first he

hated the people and duties that prevented his devoting all his time to his bride. The Tsarina, for her part, was equally devoted to her husband, and, as she never liked Russia, the inevitable tendency was for the Royal couple to become utterly detached from the realities of public life. It was only when the Tsarevitch manifested the symptoms of a horrible hereditary disease that the Empress, in her despair, yielded to the subtle influence of Rasputin, who promised to heal the child. Both authors describe vividly the seamier side of Rasputin's character. But they agree that he was a sincere pacifist at heart, and imply that he and the Empress were not deliberate traitors, but were unconscious tools in the hands of a powerfully organized German intelligence service. M. Poliakoff is, like M. Kerensky, an extremely vigorous and picturesque writer, and his study of the late Tsarina, with its mingled sympathy and criticism bears the impress of being a well-balanced estimate.

SOCIALISM AND CLASS-CONFLICT

A History of Socialist Thought. By HARRY W. LAIDLER. (Constable. 15s.)

Socialism and the Living Wage. By R. PALME DUTT. (Communist Party of Great Britain. 2s.)

DR. LAIDLER is an American, Executive Director of the League for Industrial Democracy, and author of "Socialism in Thought and Action," which was well received on this side of the Atlantic some seven years ago. His new book, more comprehensive in its scope, contains a critical account of Socialist doctrines—and of doctrines which have only a remote affinity with Socialism, as popularly understood—from Amos and Hosea to Kautsky, Tawney, and Veblen. In the opinion of its editor (who ought to know) "the book is easily the best single source of information on this important subject published in the English language." This claim is probably justified. The admirable works of Mr. Beer, to take but one example, are more interesting, and reproduce, more vividly than does the present book, the characteristic pattern and colouring of Socialist ideas; but there is probably no one volume in which so careful, complete, and well-balanced an account of them is available to the student. Its arrangement is clear and good, and it is well documented and up-to-date; some forty pages, for example, are devoted to post-war Russia, and the latest news from Ireland, Latvia, and Mexico is conscientiously incorporated. The author has treated his subject under five principal headings. Part 1 of the book deals with pre-Marxian Utopias; Part 2 with Marx; Part 3 with "other schools" between 1880 and 1914; Part 4 with post-war developments (in particular, Russia); Part 5 with "allied movements" such as consumers' co-operation. It is, perhaps, an omission that no reference is made in the book to critics of Socialist doctrine where these are not Socialists themselves, since the history of ideas should surely take account of thinkers who have thwarted, no less than of thinkers who have propounded, them. The significance of Socialist thought depends, in fact, as much upon the background of ideas against which it is presented as upon the ideas which are themselves incorporated in its structure.

A feature of the book which many will find attractive is a number of portraits of eminent Socialists, from Plato to Eugene Debs. It is interesting to note that of the sixteen thinkers included in the series, seven are still alive.

Mr. Dutt's book supplies, from one standpoint, a useful commentary on Dr. Laidler's: it exemplifies how Socialists can (and do) love one another. It is a criticism, from the orthodox Communist standpoint, of the economic policy, loosely known as "Socialism in Our Time," which was formulated in committee by Mr. Brailsford and others, and was adopted by the I.L.P., in the form of a series of resolutions, at its Whitley Bay Conference in 1926. Its central idea is that of a "direct attack" on poverty in the form of a universally applicable policy of a living wage. The proposals of the committee have gained currency in various forms; at the street-corner they are often crystallized into the statement that, when Labour gets into power, every wage-earner will receive £4 a week. Mr. Snowden, and others who, like him, are acquainted with the relevant facts, have poured contempt upon the whole plan. Certainly, it

seems to be lacking both in coherence and in candour; and a policy which is devoid of both is at a serious disadvantage, even in a political democracy.

Now comes Mr. Dutt and opens fire from another position, not (like Mr. Snowden's) in rear, but some way to the left. In his view the "living wage" policy is an expression of social-reformist "confusionism," for which Bernard Shaw, J. A. Hobson, and others who have fathered the theory of "under-consumption," are primarily responsible. And as such, it is an illusion and a sham. It attempts to make the best of both worlds; to prepare a way for Socialism by making Capitalism more efficient, to dispossess the "small owning class," which battens upon rent and interest, without the bother of a class-struggle. Such things, in Mr. Dutt's view, cannot be. The attainment of Socialism by parliamentary means is out of the question; yet I.L.P. statesmanship is bankrupt of the capacity to envisage effective alternatives, as it showed when it acquiesced in the collapse of the General Strike in May, 1926.

The book is well-written and well-argued, and all who are interested in the ideals of Communism, and who would wish to realize why its doctrines do not lend themselves to compromise, would be well-advised to read it. In the light of its analysis the I.L.P. plan for a respectable revolution—for a "redistribution" that is going to benefit all and to do no harm to anyone—emerges as the unworkable thing that it is.

THE ARAB OF THE MARSHES

Haji Rikkan, Marsh Arab. By FULANAIN. (Crichton & Windus, 10s. 6d.)

SITTING among the paraffin-cans full of tea, coffee, spices, and flaked tobacco, Fulanain allowed himself to be punted across the marshes of Southern Iraq by Jahalul and Bahalul, twin brothers, and drew meanwhile from Haji Rikkan the peddler a string of stories of desert life, honour, love, and revenge. Harsh and unfamiliar as the Arab code may sound to our ears, Fulanain passes it on in such a way as to leave no doubt of the authenticity of his information. For one thing, he does not think it necessary to adopt that brand of pseudo-archaic English which so many writers of books about the East consider suitable for the presentment of Oriental manners and customs. Fulanain, whoever he may be, writes mercifully in the reasonable style of a practical man, without sentimentality and without romance, beyond that romance which is inherent in his subject. Obviously he is no mere traveller in Iraq, but a resident in the same sense as Gertrude Bell was a resident, having familiar friends among the Arabs, friends whose confidence he has won, whose history he knows, and with whose speech he is well acquainted. Had not Haji Rikkan himself once saved his life? and is it not to Fulanain that he confesses that he is not really a Haji at all—though all his relatives believe it—having been to Ker-bela only and not to Mecca? But this is for the Englishman's ears alone; Jahalul and Bahalul must be sent out of earshot while the confession is made. However, Haji Rikkan has plenty of other stories to tell, very good stories, told as the boat slips over the marshes, in between the tall reeds, or sitting over the fire at night, when the Haji and his English friend visit the camp of some nomad sheikh. Beyond their interest as stories of desert life, they are illustrative of the difficulties of government in a country where ancient and savage creeds still play so remorseless a part in the daily life of the people, difficulties with which, as Fulanain points out, the young administration of Iraq is gallantly attempting to deal. The Arab's idea of honour, his attitude towards his women, his sense of the obligations of hospitality, all this composes an ineradicable system of prejudice which no new code of laws can afford to ignore. Occasionally, it appears, a solitary voice is raised in protest against some barbarous custom. The custom of *fasl*, for instance, by which a woman is given in lieu of blood-money to wipe out a debt of honour:—

"It is a disgrace, a blot upon the Arabs," cried a venerable old headman, "that our women should be thus constrained against their will." Silence followed, and with eager apprehensive eyes he looked round the assembly to see if but one other would raise his voice in support of this heresy; but the rest, with stern and unrelenting faces, re-

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mained unmoved. Who were they to call in question the customs of their fathers?"

Thus, one day when Fulanain arrived at Haji Rikkan's hut beside the Tigris, he found the old man in despair, beating his breast and pouring handfuls of dust from the floor over his bald head. Latifa, his last and favourite daughter, a child of twelve, was to be taken away and given as a *fast* woman. She would be harshly treated; she would cry out and there would be none to comfort her. Haji Rikkan begged to be excused; he would not come out into the marshes with his friend that day. Fulanain went alone, with Jahalul and Bahalul poling him, into the solitude of the lagoons which he says is more intense than the solitude of the desert. He took no gun, for it was simply into the heart of the marsh that he wanted to go that day, "to pick up the threads of my old intimacy with the marsh—to spend a long day in renewing the old impressions of its solitary beauty." So he ordered the brothers to take him to the Chains, but for what he found when he reached that lonely village, and the dramatic experience which awaited him there, the curious must be referred to the pages of his book.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST.

TWO SOLDIERS

Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala, G.C.B., G.C.S.I. By LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THE HON. H. D. NAPIER, C.M.G. (Arnold, 21s.)

Eighty Years: Soldiering, Politics, Games. By GENERAL SIR NEVILLE LYTTLETON, G.C.B., G.C.V.O. (Hodder & Stoughton, 20s.)

THE present time is an unfortunate one for the memoirs of military men, since the general desire to avoid war is incompatible with spontaneous admiration of military prowess. The Imperialism that shone resplendently and gilded every campaign no longer dazzles so brilliantly in retrospect; and we are apt to forget the Army as a profession in our recollection of war as a disaster. But the keynote of professional soldiery is struck by Sir Neville Lyttelton's genial remark to a Boer commandant who asked how long the war would last. "I said that it depended on his people: we had no idea of stopping, that war was our business and we didn't care how long it went on." Between them, these two books show it going on, intermittently, for over half a century. From Lord Napier's first Indian campaign in 1845 to Sir Neville Lyttelton's last South African one in 1902, fighting is, as often as not, traceable to the results and responsibilities of Empire Building.

Although it is from the Abyssinian campaign of 1867 that Lord Napier derives his title, the great part of his military career was spent in India, whether in fighting or in constructive administrative work. Here he began as an engineer in the Punjab; played an important part during the Mutiny in the relief and capture of Lucknow; and finally, as Commander-in-Chief in India, exercised authority over public works both military and civil. His concern for the Army's welfare found him strongly opposed to any scheme involving reduction of expenditure; in a similar spirit he deplored the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan after the 1879 expedition rather than annex the Kandahar district to British India. Politically and economically, then, his views were those which any soldier of the Victorian era might be expected to hold. His fame for succeeding generations is likely to rest more firmly on the brilliant strategic and engineering skill which led to the capture of the almost impregnable rock fortress of Magdala from King Theodore of Abyssinia.

The biography now published has been compiled by Lord Napier's son, largely from correspondence, dispatches, and similar memoranda, much of which is included, as it stands, in the narrative. There are disadvantages in this method of procedure when it is carried too far. Though Lord Napier's own detailed reports of his operations are interesting enough to justify their breaking of the continuity, there is less reason for quoting long interchanges of letters whose upshot might be summarized in a page. The book suffers, too, from that dual centrality which so easily invades the biography of a man whose actions are connected with historical events. It is never certain whether the man is being

considered for his bearing on military history, or whether military history is subordinated to its bearing on the man.

Sir Neville Lyttelton's casual and rather perfunctory reminiscences include records of service at the War Office, notes on Gladstone and on cricket, in addition to accounts of campaigns in the Sudan and South Africa. In the latter Sir Neville, who took part in the fighting at Colenso, Spion Kop, and Ladysmith, not only shared the general military distrust of Buller's ability as Commander-in-Chief, but discloses the fact that Buller himself shared it from the outset, expressing strong objections to accepting the command. He "said that he was sick of South Africa, and if he was forced to go out he would come away as soon as he could." This statement, directly opposed to Sir Neville's soldierly view quoted above, strikes a premature note of disillusionment. It is little wonder that, at a time when Queen Victoria could still be held immortal by the Kaffirs, Buller forfeited the confidence of his officers and his Government. SYLVA NORMAN.

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

H.M.V. RECORDS

THE Oriana Madrigal Society are well-known; they sing a good carol in the "Coventry Carol," and they are even better in "Brigg Fair," with Norman Stone as soloist (10-in. record, E473. 4s. 6d.). Three excellent records are of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Gondoliers," recorded under the direction of D'Oyly Carte. The best is "I am a courtier grave and serious" and "Here is a case," while on the other side is the Finale (D1345. 6s. 6d.). The other two records are "Of happiness the very pith" "Rising early in the morning," and "Take a pair of sparkling eyes" (D1342. 6s. 6d.), and "Here we are at the risk of our lives," "Dance a cachucha," "There lived a king," and "In a contemplative fashion" (D1243. 6s. 6d.).

COLUMBIA RECORDS.

THE Columbia are to be congratulated on one of the most ambitious ventures, a complete record of Handel's "The Messiah" in their Masterworks Series. It has been recorded at a performance at the Central Hall, with the B.B.C. Choir, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, and it is issued in two albums containing eighteen records. (L2018-2035. 6s. 6d. each). It is a remarkable achievement. "The Messiah" is one of the few long masterpieces in which music and words have been consistently and perfectly mated, and it is therefore essential to its enjoyment and appreciation that we should be able to hear what the singer is singing. This is not always easy in records, particularly choral records. In this respect these Columbia records are admirable. In other respects they are rather uneven. The acoustics of the Central Hall are by no means perfect, and some of the records suffer. The least satisfactory are those in which the full choir is singing. The soloists come off much better. Miss Dora Labrette is the soprano, Miss Muriel Brunskill the contralto, Mr. Eisdell the tenor, Mr. Harold Williams the baritone, while Miss Nellie Walker sings in the Quartettes "Since by man" and "For as in Adam." Some of the records are very beautiful, particularly where Miss Labrette is singing, e.g., "He shall feed his flock" (2025) and "How beautiful are the feet" (2031).

BRUNSWICK RECORDS.

THE Brunswick have produced a brilliant record in Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," the Nocturne and the Scherzo, played by the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Toscanini (50106. 8s.). This incidental music is, of course, reckoned among Mendelssohn's "masterpieces of orchestration," and is still, over eighty years after its first performance in England, extremely popular. It is well played, and the tone, particularly of the woodwind, is admirable. One hopes that the Brunswick will go on to record the Overture and Intermezzo. Quite as good in its way is Heinrich Schlusnus, baritone, singing the ever-popular Toreador's Song from "Carmen"; his other song, "Nun its's Vollbracht," from Lortzing's "Undine," is an effective contrast (12-in. record. 50103. 8s.).

Lighter music is supplied by Tosti's "Parted" and Drigo's "Millions d'Harlequin," played by Florence de Yong on the Wurlitzer Organ (133); "Pianotrope" and "By the Waters of Minnetonka," piano solos by Fred Elizade (132); "Malta" and "Walking on Air," vocal duets by Kēl Keech and Ord Hamilton (134); "Miss Annabelle Lee" and "Swanee Shore," Ben Bernie, foxtrots (3631); "Did you mean it?" and "Charmaine," Abe Lyman, foxtrots (3648). These are all 3s.



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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

BULLISHNESS—CABLE COMPANIES V. MARCONI—FILM SHARES—CORDOBA CENTRAL.

EXTREME bullishness marked the opening of the new account on the Stock Exchange last Monday. End-of-the-year selling ceased on the previous Friday. Dealings since Monday have been for settlement on January 12th. To a large extent the professionals singled out industrial shares which they thought the public would fancy in the New Year. There is a good deal of justification for the rise in values. There is the prospect of cheaper money and better trade. The reports of many industrial companies, which will be presented in February and March, are bound to make favourable comparison with 1926 results. The next two months should, therefore, see active trading in the Stock Exchange. But no wise investor will follow the recent rises in certain industrial shares. Triplex Glass, touching £15 on Monday, showed a rise of £7½, or 100 per cent. in two weeks, while Vocalion, at 48s. 6d., scored a rise of 13s. 6d., or 37 per cent., in the same period. This is evidence of gambling.

The following table shows the depreciation which has occurred in certain cable company shares since the Stock Exchange woke up to the fact that wireless telegraphy was a serious competitor :—

	1926.		1927.	
	High.	Low.	High.	Current.
Eastern (Stock) ...	192½	170	183	146
Eastern Extension (£10) ...	19½	17	18 15-16	15
Western (£10) ...	18 15-16	16½	17½	13½xd

What is the outlook for the cable companies? At the present moment there is no question of wireless displacing entirely cable telegraphy. While wireless is a serious competitor in the cheaper, that is, the less urgent traffic (e.g., the "deferred" or "week-end letter" messages), it is not yet able to divert much of the urgent class of business from the cable companies for the reason that at certain times of the year there is a period of fading in "beam" transmission. "Beam" transmission is, of course, much quicker than cable transmission, but the use of the "loaded" cable enables the cable company to dispatch a number of different messages, each at sixty words a minute, at the same time. The speed in the "beam" system is limited only to the capacity of the mechanical recording apparatus, which is at present about 150 words a minute, but the sixty words a minute of the cable company is said to be better from the point of view of accuracy and ease of handling. Nevertheless, cable companies seem to be scared of the Marconi Company and have in effect appealed to the Government for protection.

The significant fact is that although there is no cutting of rates between Marconi and the cable companies, except in the case of the Empire beam services, Marconi is getting an increasing share of the traffic. There is only one wireless transmitting station between Great Britain and the United States, and that is worked on the old long-wave system; yet in competition with fourteen cables it is carrying 20 per cent. of the traffic. What will happen when wireless communication between Great Britain and the United States will be working—as it will shortly—on the beam system? The Government, being interested in the Pacific Cable Board and Imperial Cables, may bring about some co-operation between Marconi and the cable companies, but it certainly cannot support the cable companies against Marconi seeing that it has given a contract to Marconi to erect beam stations linking up the Empire, under which Marconi gets a royalty of 6½ per cent. on gross receipts. The rise in Marconi shares reflects the growing belief that wireless has the whip hand of the cable companies. The best asset for the cable companies is that they have large reserves and can afford to cut their rates if Marconi lowers wireless rates.

The holders of cable company shares will take comfort that for many years the companies in accordance with their conservative financing have paid 10 per cent. tax free dividends out of little more than half their profits :—

	Net Profit.	Tax Free Div. Paid.	Surplus Profit.
Eastern Telegraph.	£	£	£
Year to Dec. 31.			
1924 ...	939,894	500,000	439,894
1925 ...	1,044,398	500,000	544,398
1926 ...	850,908	500,000	350,908
Eastern Extension.			
1924 ...	846,898	400,000	446,896
1925 ...	854,293	400,000	454,293
1926 ...	951,996	400,000	551,996
Western.			
Year to June 30.			
1925 ...	535,012	311,895	223,117
1926 ...	590,626	311,895	278,731
1927 ...	412,075	311,895	100,180

* After allowing for Income Tax, Pref. and Deb. interest.

Taking into account the reserves, the balance-sheets of the companies showed *net* assets in excess of market valuations.

The new film company shares seem heavier than the water which the greater part of their share capital represents. These are the current and issue prices :—

	Issued.	Current Price.
British Lion Pref. (160,000 shs.)	10s. paid	4s.
British Lion Def. (160,000 shs.)	1s.	1s. 3d.
British Filmcraft	No market	yet been made in shares
Whitehall Film	10% Pref.	
(160,000 shs.)	10s. paid	6s.
Whitehall Film	10% Def.	
(160,000 shs.)	1s.	1s. 6d.

We were voicing pretty strong feelings in the City when we warned investors against subscribing to these film production gambles. *VARIETY*, which is the leading theatrical and film paper in New York, has some expert comment to make on the recent issues. The comment is headed "England's Fool Money." In the course of its criticism it ridicules the estimates which one film prospectus gave of profits of £80,000 for the British Empire distribution of five films costing £55,000. According to *VARIETY*, it would be wizardry to get £8,000 for the whole of the British Empire outside the United Kingdom for these pictures. Here is another comment : "One prospectus appeared with studios and plant valued at over £30,000, though in the open market, even with this boom on, it would hardly fetch one-half that sum." Yet we are told to expect more film gambles. Gambling on dogs at Wembley is one thing for the Stock Exchange to bear; but gambling on pictures being made in the derelict Wembley Exhibition buildings is the last straw that may break the camel's back.

Another high yielding speculative security which might be "mixed" with safe, low-yielding stocks to bring up the average yield is Cordoba Central Railway first preference income stock. This stock ranks next to the 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. debenture stocks which amount to £14,373,564, the interest payments on which take £626,678 per annum. Net earnings for the year ending June, 1927, which were slightly below those of 1925-26, amounted to £929,551. The Company paid the full 7 per cent. on its first preference income stock, 5 per cent. on its second preference income stock, and 2 per cent. on its ordinary stock. For the current year traffic receipts have been affected by conditions which were unfavourable for the movement of the sugar crop, but from the next half of the year receipts are expected to recover. There is, therefore, a fair prospect that the dividend on the first preference income stock, which is non-cumulative and payable out of profits, will be covered. At the present price of 87-88 the first preference income stock yields 7.95 per cent. on a 7 per cent. dividend.

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